Moral Essays,

Contain'd in several

TREATISES

ON MANY

Important Duties:

Written in *FRENCH*

By *Messieurs du Port Royal.*

Done into *English*

By a Person of Quality.

Third Volume.

The Third Edition, with Amendments.

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An Advertiſement.

WE have given to this Volume the Title of *The Third Volume of Moral Eſſays*, becauſe the Deſign we had of joyning to the ſame Work, and under the ſame Title, the Treatiſes which had appeared under that of the *Education of a Prince*, and of Compoſing a Second Volume of *ESSAYS*, being Publiſhing, this here, which, without that, would have been but the Second, is now the Third.

'Tis in Conſideration of reducing under this ſame Title all the Treatiſes which are of the

ſame nature, that we have added to this a ſmall Writing of Plays, whereof we had a Right to Diſpoſe, although ſome Perſons had already inſerted it in other Works. And we have been by ſo much more inclinable thereunto, as theſe Works were leſs common. It hath not quite loſt the Grace of Novelty, beſide that we have taken an Occaſion to Correct it in divers places, and to add thereunto likewiſe ſomething.

There is yet another Treatiſe, which is that of *Divers ways wherein God is Tempted*, of which there might have been a Part ſeen under another Form, but it is ſo changed and augmented that one would ſay it is abſolutely new, or rather that it appears here under

under its natural Shape and Form, whereas it was, as it were, Diſguiſed in the other.

It would be to no purpoſe to Note by what Accident theſe TREATISES have been made, ſeeing that it is not this Occaſion which can render them Uſeful, the Publick Judging thereof for the moſt part only according to the Relation they have to its Diſpoſition and Reliſh.

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MO-

MORAL ESSAYS.

First Treatiſe.

Of the Knowledge of ones ſelf.

First Part.

I.

THE moſt common Precept of *Pagan* and *Chriſtian* Philoſophy is this, which Orders us to know our ſelves; and there is nothing in which men agree more than in the Precept of this Duty. 'Tis one of thoſe ſenſible Truths, which hath no need of Proofs, and which finds in all men a heart which acknowledges them, and a light which approves them. How agreeable ſoever we imagine the Illuſion of a Man who is deceived in the *Idea*, which he hath of himſelf, we find it always unfortu-

fortunate to be deceived, and we are on the contrary ſtruck with the Sentiment, which a Poet hath expreſſed in theſe Verſes,

Illi Mors gravis incubat,
Qui notus nimis omnibus,
Ignotus moritur ſibi.

II.

We muſt ſet a greater value on theſe Principles in which Men find themſelves united by an unanimous Conſent, becauſe that ſeldom happens to them, being always by their vain and malignant humours inclin'd to contradict one another upon the leaſt occaſion; every one having a deſire either to diſparage others, or to diſtinguiſh himſelf from them, in ſaying ſomething that is new, and not following ſimply the common Tract: So Truth muſt be very clear, when ſtifling this Inclination it forces them to reunite themſelves in ſome Maxim. 'Tis that which happens in reſpect of this. For there hath not been a Philoſopher who hath oppoſed it, and who hath pretended that Man ought to avoid knowing himſelf. What if ſome one hath paſſed even to this exceſs? he cannot do it but by ſuppoſing that Man is ſo unfortunate, and that his Evils are ſo without remedy, that he could not but increaſe his Miſery by knowing himſelf. And ſo one ſhould always know ones ſelf, even to conclude by this ſtrange way of Arguing, *That it is good not to know ones ſelf.*

III.

But that which is very ſtrange is, that being ſo united to grant the Importance of this Duty—— they are ſtill far from practiſing it. For, not labouring ſeriouſly to obtain this knowledge, they are hardly employed all their life, but with care how to ſhun it. Nothing is more odious to them than this light, which diſcovers them to their proper Eyes, and which obliges them

them to ſee themſelves ſuch as they are. Thus they do all things to hide it from themſelves, and they eſtabliſh their quiet in living ignorantly, and in the forgetfulneſs of their State and Condition.

IV.

A great Wit of this Age hath ſhewn, in an excellent Diſcourſe, that this deſire to avoid the knowledge of ones ſelf is the Fountain of all the tumultuous Occupations of Men, and above all, of that which they call *Divertiſement*; That they ſeek in that only to rob themſelves of themſelves; That it ſufficeth to render a Man miſerable to oblige him to conſider himſelf, and that there is no Human Felicity in this World which is able to endure this Conſideration. Thus Man without Grace is ſo great a puniſhment to himſelf, that he inclines continually to fly from himſelf, that he looks upon himſelf in ſome ſort as his own great Enemy, and that he thinks his happineſs conſiſts in being forgetful of himſelf, and running head-long into this forgetfulneſs.

V.

This inclination is not only the effect of an evil Cuſtom, nor of a particular diſorder amongſt ſome Men; it's the general propenſity of our corrupt Nature. We are out of our ſelves from the very moment of our Birth, and the Soul, which in her infancy doth only buſie her ſelf with outward things and the Pleaſures of the Body, doth hereby render theſe Objects and Pleaſures ſo familiar to her, and cleaves ſo ſtrongly to them, that ſhe cannot enter again into her ſelf, but by great trouble and violence. And as ſhe finds not there what ſhe deſires, ſhe freeth her ſelf the ſooneſt ſhe can, and Melancholy inclines her to return preſently to thoſe other Objects, to which ſhe applies her ſelf with ſo much more eagerneſs, by how much more they aſſiſt her to forget her interiour Miſeries, the ſight whereof ſhe cannot undergo. *Projicit ſe foras miſerabiliter ſcalpi avide Contactu ſenſibilium.*

VI.

But not to urge any farther, that this not knowing ones ſelf muſt not be countenanced, and the better to dive to the bottom thereof, there muſt be added, that this knowledge is joyn'd in Man to an inclination which appears quite contrary, and which makes him to regard himſelf in every thing. Becauſe the greateſt Pleaſure of a Proud Man is to contemplate the *Idea* which he makes of himſelf. This *Idea* is the *Origin* of all his vain ſatisfactions: He relates all to it, and nothing pleaſeth him but in proportion as it contributes to puff it up, to adorn it, and to render it more lively.

VII.

Theſe two inclinations, whereof the one makes us to fly, and the other to ſeek the knowledge of our ſelves, are alike natural to a Man; ſo ſpring they from the ſame Fountain, tho' in appearance they are oppoſite.

Man, as being vain, will ſee himſelf. He avoids ſeeing himſelf, becauſe being vain he is not able to ſuffer the ſight of his Faults and Miſeries. To accord theſe two contrary deſires, he hath recourſe to a Subtilty worthy his Vanity, which gives him means to ſatisfie them both at the ſame time. This Craft or Subtility is to cover all his Faults, to blot them, in ſome ſort, out of the Image which he hath formed of himſelf, and only to include therein the qualities which may raiſe him in his own thoughts. If he hath them not effectively, he hath them imaginarily, and if he find them not in his proper perſon, he endeavours to ſeek them in the opinion of Men, or in outward things which he joyns to his *Idea*, as if they made ſome part thereof; by means of this deceit he is always abſent from himſelf, and preſent to himſelf: He looks upon himſelf continually, and never ſees himſelf truly, becauſe he ſees, inſtead of himſelf, only the vain Phantomes he hath formed thereof.

VIII.

VIII.

So when a *Caribian* repreſents himſelf to himſelf, he only ſees a certain figure reſembling the image which he hath ſeen of himſelf in the water; and beholding it as exact in Shooting, as dexterous in Fiſhing, as Maſter of a certain Cabin, as having ſlain ſuch and ſuch of his Enemies, as Husband to ſuch a Woman, he applies himſelf abſolutely to theſe Objects and *Ideas* which renew them, and thus he paſſeth his whole life without reflecting on that part of his being which thinks and reaſoneth, not dreaming what it is, from whence it came, what will become of it, what may cauſe its good or bad Fortune.

It is not to be imagined that the Pride of other Men acts otherways then this of theſe miſerable People. They adorn only this Image, which is the Object of their Love a little more. A Captain looking on himſelf ſees a Phantome on Horſeback, who commands ſome Soldiers. A Prince ſees a Man richly Cloathed, who is looked on with reſpect, who is obeyed every where. A Magiſtrate ſees a Man dreſſed up with the Ornaments belonging to his Dignity, who is reſpected by others, becauſe he is in a condition to oblige or diſoblige them. A vain proud Woman looks on herſelf as an Idol, Charming by her Beauty thoſe who behold her. An Uſurer ſees himſelf in the midſt of his Treaſures. An Ambitious Man repreſents himſelf ſurrounded with People who humble themſelves at his Greatneſs. And ſo every one in all theſe actions have no other end, whereof ſelf-love is the Original, but to joyn always to the *Idea* that they have of themſelves, new Ornaments and new Titles.

IX.

There is alſo a more ſpiritual *Idea* one hath of himſelf, which is, when not conceiving diſtinctly either good or bad qualities, one conceives only what is expreſſed by the word *Me*; and this word conceived in this manner

doth likewiſe hide from us all our faults, and doth ſuffice to gain our love. The ſecret apprehenſion we have thereof creeps in every where; we relate all thereto; This is the Principle of the moſt part of Pleaſures that we enjoy. And though we ſhould come to unfold or unravel what this *Me* comprehends, we ſhould find therein nothing lovely, and may be nothing which would not give horrour; nevertheleſs we love it under this ſo confuſed *Idea* of *Me*, and we ſhun in it the diſtinct and particular apprehenſion which makes us hate it.

X.

From whence think you proceeds this Trouble, which overwhelms thoſe who have been in great Places, when forced to live at quiet in their own Houſes? It is not only becauſe they ſee themſelves too clearly, and that the apprehenſion they have of their Miſeries and Faults doth trouble them. Perchance that is one of the reaſons of their Melancholy, but not the only one. It is alſo becauſe they do not ſee themſelves throughly, and that there are few things which renew the *Idea* of their *Me*. This *Idea* cauſeth their pleaſure during their Fortune, and its loſs their diſpleaſure during their Diſgrace; we love not to employ our ſelves in ſolitude; the Images which we form there are infinitely more obſcure then thoſe aided by outward Objects. Men in great Employments are advertiſed by all thoſe who addreſs themſelves to them, that they are Powerful, that they are able to hurt or aſſiſt. A thouſand things doth ſtir up lively the *Idea* of their *Me*, and ſets it before their Eyes with ſome agreeable and pleaſing quality of *Great*, *Powerful*, and of *Reſpect*. Common Civility does the ſame thing in reſpect of thoſe who live in the World. For as it is fill'd with Teſtimonials of Eſteem, with Reſpect, and with Applications, it gives occaſion of repreſenting themſelves to themſelves, as being loved and eſteemed, and by conſequence as being lovely and eſteemable. And by a contrary reaſon theſe Deſerts and Solitudes do vex and trouble Vain and Ambitious Men, becauſe

becauſe they do not ſpeak to them of themſelves, and becauſe they would have them ſpeak of nothing elſe.

XI.

There is a pleaſure in hearing Self-love ſpeak when it is not diſguiſed at all, and that it diſcovers lively, what pleaſeth it in difficult Occupations, wherewith it chargeth Men. There is ſcarcely, for example, any more laborious than thoſe who ſpeak in publick, as Traitors and Advocates; they are obliged to charge their Memories with a thouſand unpleaſing Affairs, and apply themſelves to find out Devices and Expreſſions to fill up their Diſcourſes, to drain the Forces of their Bodies and their Spirits, upon matters which they ſhall be glad to forget, as ſoon as they ſhall be diſcharged of their Offices. Nevertheleſs, becauſe there are many things in their profeſſions, which renews the *Idea* of themſelves; thoſe who exerciſe them with Honour, think themſelves the happieſt of Men. Let us but hear what one of theſe ancient Orators upon this ſubject ſaid, to judge of what the reſt maintain. *What is there more ſweet*, ſaid he, *to an honeſt Man, born for honeſt pleaſures, than to ſee his Houſe always full of people, and to know that they render him theſe reſpects, not becauſe of his Riches, nor out of hopes of being his Heirs; nor becauſe of ſome Office he enjoys, but in reſpect of himſelf; that even thoſe to whom we give reſpect, in hopes to be their Heirs, thoſe who are the richeſt, and the moſt in credit to come to ſee him, although oftentimes he be young and poor, to the end, that they may recommend to him their own, or their Friends Concerns? Is there any thing in Riches, and Grandeur, which can give pleaſure equal to that which he feels; when he ſees perſons conſiderable for their age, and whoſe Credit is ſpread through all the World, to confeſs in the abundance of Riches which they enjoy, that they have not the firſt and greateſt of all Worldly Advantages, which is that which an Orator profeſſeth? What ſhall I ſay of that throng of People, who preſent themſelves to accompany him, or who go before him? What ſhall* Quintil. dis Orat.

I ſay of the ſplendor with which he appears in publick, of the reſpect given him in Mens Opinions; of the joy which he conceives, when being raiſed to ſpeak ſingly in the midſt of a throng of People, who liſten to him attentively, he ſees the Eyes of all the Auditors turned towards him: That the People crowd to hear him, and that he ſtamps in all their Minds the ſame Impreſſions, which he deſires to make appear in himſelf.

Behold what made this Roman undergo the Troubles and Diſguſts of his Profeſſion. And if all thoſe who are in other dangerous and painful Employments ſpeak as ſimply as he; they would tell us alſo, that all that pleaſed them therein, is reduced to this *Idea* of their *Me* honoured and reſpected by others.

XII.

We ſee clearly enough by theſe Examples, in what faſhion Self-love makes uſe of outward Objects, to ſatisfie theſe two inclinations natural to Men of knowing, and not knowing himſelf, not ſuffering on the one part, that he ſee himſelf otherwiſe, than by a confuſed *Idea*, which repreſents to him no one fault; and adding thereto on the other part, all that he can of exterior things, which give him means to fix thereunto a phantaſtick Image of Greatneſs. But this nevertheleſs doth not ſuffice Man to procure him the reſt, and the pleaſure which he ſeeks, nor to avoid the knowledge of thoſe faults, whereof he hath ſo much horror. He hath need of quite other inventions to ſhun the ſight of himſelf. In vain would he publiſh himſelf abroad, he would not fail to find himſelf there, and a thouſand things would be able to ſet his faults before his Eyes. He would ſee the Images thereof in all the faults, and in all the miſeries of others, which he could not avoid ſeeing, and which oftentimes he looks on, even with pleaſure. So that he would not find his account better out of himſelf, than in himſelf. There is great likelihood, that if the fear of ſeeing himſelf, had made him go out, the Image of himſelf, which ſhould have been repre-

repreſented to him by all theſe outward Objects, would have made him to enter again, how unwilling ſoever he might have been.

XIII.

To comprehend better in what manner Man may be forced to ſee himſelf by objects, which are out of him, and what he doth to warrant himſelf from them it is neceſſary to conſider, that he does not look upon himſelf leſs according to a certain being which he hath in the Imagination of others, than according to what he really is; and that he does not only draw his Portraiture by what he himſelf knows of himſelf; but alſo by the ſight which he diſcovers in the Minds of others. Becauſe we are all in reſpect of one another, as that Man who ſerved as a Model to the Practitioners in the Academies of Painters. Each of thoſe, who environ us, do form to themſelves a Portraiture of us, and the different Ways wherewith our Actions are obſerved do give leave to make them differently.

The great and the little, thoſe who have a good repute, and thoſe who have none; are hardly diſtinguiſhed, but becauſe there are more people who draw the Pictures of the one than of the others. How many draw the Portraiture of a Prince? All his Kingdom, all Foreign Countries are for him an Academy of Painters, whereof he is the Model. Thoſe who are more remote repreſent him by more groſs Draughts. Thoſe who are nearer do draw his Picture more lively, and more reſembling. A mean Man, on the contrary, who lives in his Family, is only Painted by the ſmall number of theſe who know him, and the Portraitures which they make of him ſcarcely go out of the Limit of the Town.

But what is more conſiderable in this is, that Men do not only draw the Portraitures of others, but that they ſee alſo thoſe which are made of them, and if they would look on them indeed, nothing would be ſo capable

capable to remedy their Pride, nor more able to help to undeceive them, than even the ſight of theſe Portraitures.

Let us chuſe the greateſt and moſt glorious Man in the World, and allow him ſo great a Wit as to contemplate at once all this variety of Judgments which are made of him, and to enjoy fully the ſight of the Thoughts and of the Motions which he excites in others, there is no vanity can undergo this ſight. For a ſmall number of advantageous Opinions he would ſee an infinite which would diſpleaſe him. He would ſee that the faults which he diſſembles, or which he doth not know, are in the Eyes of the moſt part of People; that they entertain themſelves often about no other thing, and that Men obſerve them only in this manner; he would ſee that the World is very little touched with all theſe fine qualities with which he flatters himſelf that ſome ſee them not at all, others behold them with a coldneſs, others only obſerve that in which they are defective, ſome hide and disfigure them, joyning thereunto ſome faults which they know in him, and that from all this he draws his own Picture, which is only proper to extinguiſh his Pride.

There needs only to learn to humble our ſelves, that we open our Eyes to all theſe ſeveral Opinions Men form of us, and Reaſon, if we deſire ſincerely to know them, will diſcover them. But becauſe Vanity is an Evil whereof we will not be cured, and that we place our happineſs not to be cured of it, we make uſe of an Invention, which how groſs ſoever it is doth nevertheleſs work its effect. It is, that although Reaſon in general be convinc'd that Men form of us many Judgments not very favourable, and that the Examples of thoſe we hear ever and anon made of others, and thoſe which we make of them our ſelves might inſtruct us, do nevertheleſs in ſome ſort cauſe us not to ſee thoſe which are diſadvantageous to us, and to apply our ſelves chiefly to thoſe which are advantageous to us. So in Baniſhing from our Minds all theſe Objects which may be

be able to diſpleaſe us, in fixing our ſelves only to thoſe which are pleaſing to us, in deceiving our ſelves willingly, and in avoiding being deceived, our Vanity remains half ſatisfied, and procures this fond Pleaſure in which Vain Men place their falſe Felicity.

XIV.

It is yet more eaſie, that the Great ones, and generally all thoſe whom it is our intent to pleaſe, do entertain themſelves in this Illuſion, becauſe inſtead of making for our ſelves only one Portraiture of other Men, we may in ſome ſort make two; the one Interiour which is true, the other Exteriour, wherein we Paint nothing but what we judge may pleaſe them; and great care is taken afterwards to ſet before their Eyes only this falſe Picture, and to endeavour to make them take that for the true one. Without doubt they would eaſily hinder themſelves from being deceived therein, and might convince themſelves if they would, that there is nothing ſo falſe and ſo vain as all theſe Teſtimonies of Eſteem and Affection which Men ſhew them. They know often what they think themſelves of thoſe to whom they return the like, and they have no reaſon to judge others more ſincere than themſelves. But they are eaſily held back in this point, and do not dive ſo deep into theſe things. They content themſelves therefore with this deceitful Surface, they leave there theſe Interiour Portraitures which they fear to diſcover, and they make a ſtop only at theſe flattering Pictures, which are made purpoſely to draw from them what we pretend thereby.

XV.

We make uſe of the ſame preparation to hinder that the faults and miſeries of others, and the Judgment which we ſee made of them, and which we our ſelves make of them, do not call us to our ſelves, nor diſcover to us our own jugglings. Wit aſſiſted by Self-love doth

doth cut off all the reflections it can make, or applies it ſelf ſo little thereunto that they make ſcarcely any Impreſſion at all. We hear every hour People who deceive themſelves, ſpoken of with ſcorn. We ſee that they are the common Objects of Mens diſdain, becauſe there is nothing more ridiculous than a Man deceived, and deceived by his own Vanity. Nevertheleſs, we do not think that we are thoſe Ridiculous and Deceived Men; let Men ſay of us in our abſence, what is ſaid of others before us; let us give therein as much Subject as they, and let there be no appearance that they have more reſpect for us than for all the reſt.

How frequent and how certain ſoever theſe objects may be, they have not more force to oblige the Mind to enter into it ſelf, and there to ſee the ſame Faults and the ſame Miſeries than it ſees in others. Think we more on death for hearing or for ſeeing the Death of thoſe with whom we have lived? We fly his Spectacle if we can; if we cannot fly it, yet we endeavour to fly the Reflections it ought to produce. If we cannot ſtifle them abſolutely, we turn away from them with what expedition poſſible. What I have ſaid of Death, may be ſaid of all the other Miſeries, and of all Humane Frailties, which may be able to repreſent ours to us. Theſe Images ſtrike us at every moment, but we endeavour as often to reſiſt, and not to be daunted. We deceive our ſelves if we can, and if we cannot do it abſolutely, at leaſt we ſtrive to turn our Thoughts another way.

XVI.

What ſhould we ſay of a Man, who ſeeing his Picture every day in a Looking-Glaſs, and ſeeing it therein continually ſhould not know it, and would never ſay, *Behold I am here?* Should we not accuſe him of Stupidity little different from Folly? This nevertheleſs is what all Men do; and it is likewiſe the only Secret they have found to make themſelves happy. They

ſee

ſee every moment the Image of their own ſelves, I mean of their own proper faults, in thoſe of others, and yet they will not acknowledge them. To be full of Miſeries and not to ſee them; to be ignorant of our Faults when no body elſe is; to be the Subject of moſt Peoples laughter, and not willing to know any thing of it; to feed our ſelves with vain Imaginations being unwilling to know that they are vain, is a Condition which doth not ſeem very deſirable. Prodigalities it is this which is the delight of Worldly [illegible] make, are of the Great ones.

XVII.

'Tis by theſe means we are interrupted from ſeeing the Truth, when we ſhould uſe ſome Care and Application to find it. But there are ſome rencounters wherein Truth ſhews it ſelf to us, and in which we ſhould be forced to ſee it, if we did not uſe Cunning to avoid it. For ſome times we find Men Charitable enough to try to free us from the Deluſions wherein we live in reſpect of our ſelves. Self-love therefore endeavours to baniſh this inconvenience, wants not yet the way to proſper therein. For it expreſſes ſo much Melancholly and Evil Humour to thoſe who would do us this good Office; it finds ſo many pretences not to believe what is diſcovered to us of our faults; it is ſo ingenious to find out ſome greater in thoſe who obſerve ours, and to make the Judgments which are made to our diſadvantage paſs for wicked, that there is hardly any body will hazard to tell them us.

The general Principle that Self-love inſpires us with, is, That we condemn nothing in us by a Motive of Equity and Juſtice. So when any one ſhews that he does not approve of us in every thing, we attribute to him the *Idea* of prevention, of Jealouſie, or ſome other leſs favourable. And as no body loves to be looked ſo upon, there is formed amongſt Men a kind of Conſpiration to diſſemble the Opinions which they have one

one of another, and there is no agreement which is better preſerved than that, becauſe it is grounded upon the Sentiment of Self-Love, from which few or none are exempt.

XVIII.

We muſt not think that Men do not take care to hide the Truth only in reſpect of thoſe whom they fear [redacted] they hope ſomething. They do the ſame, more in reſpect of all the World.

Men apply themſelves more to deceive great Men, but they do not apply themſelves to undeceive thoſe of Meaner Quality. This is all the difference that's made between the one and the other. They love not to be hated by any body, ſo they do not love to tell truth to any one. They know on the contrary, that to make it be received there ſhould be many Niceties, Moderations, and many ſtudied Inventions. Now Men will not take this pains for People they do not value. So we do not tell the Truth to Perſons of Quality, becauſe it is not our Intereſt to do it. Nor to thoſe of Meaner Degree, becauſe we have not Intereſt enough to tell it them.

XIX.

This reſerve that Men keep amongſt themſelves in avoiding the Communicating the Thoughts they have to the diſadvantage of one another, is not nevertheleſs without Limits. And there is reaſon ſometimes which perſuades them to diſpence therewith. There needs alſo often but a little provocation, to noiſe abroad on a Sudden what we had kept ſecret for a long Time. And moreover, we have not been reſerved in this manner, but in ſpeaking to the Perſons themſelves, whoſe faults were known to us. But that which we diſſembled in their preſence, we ſpeak ordinarily more freely in their abſence, as we have had then more trouble to refrain. It is true, we govern our ſelves a little more

more reſervedly in reſpect of thoſe who can hurt us, and we uſe more precaution to diſcover what Men think of them. But as it is an unſufferable Conſtraint to hide always theſe our Sentiments, the deſire which we have to free our ſelves from them, makes us eaſily put on Confidence enough to truſt thoſe to whom we ſpeak and that there wants little or no reaſons to incline us to declare our ſelves with freedom.

Now although theſe wicked Prodigalities, which happen ſo often in the Diſcourſes Men make, are in themſelves a very great Evil, ſeeing that whereas Charity doth oblige to tell Perſons themſelves of their faults, to give them thereby means to Correct them, and to hide them from others, to favour them we do ordinarily quite contrary, and ſpeak of theſe faults to all the World, except to thoſe to whom it ſhould be neceſſary to ſpeak of them. There might happen nevertheleſs from thence ſome good, if we had a care to profit thereby. Becauſe, theſe particular diſcourſes ſpreading themſelves by little and little, and forming a publick Clamour, there returns often thereby ſomething to the Ears of them it concerns, becauſe there are many found, who, having not Charity or Force enough to tell themſelves what they think, are glad to be diſcharged thereof by attributing it to others. It would be then a means for thoſe to whom it is Diſcovered, to draw them out of that Deluſion wherein they live. But we have ſuch deceitful Hearts, and ſo full of averſion from any thing of Truth, that we abuſe very often this means, and render it uſeleſs to our ſelves. For inſtead of judging of theſe Diſcourſes, and theſe Opinions by which we are detracted as we ought, they are ſpread abroad amongſt an infinite number of Perſons, and ſo we have not right to complain thereof to any Particular Body, the Inclination we have to deceive our ſelves cauſeth us to turn all our Malice againſt him who is charged therewith; We perſuade our ſelves that he is ſingle in his Opinion; that he hath not entred thereupon, but through Hate or Intereſt, and that there is no Man of Senſe

Senſe and Reaſon who does not condemn it. We attribute to him likewiſe ſome Imprudence, or ſome Exceſs for pretending more right to reject thoſe advices, and by the means of this Voluntary Deluſion, we ſtifle the Impreſſion which theſe Diſcourſes might Imprint in us, we conſerve our ſelves in the Eſteem we have of our ſelves, and we avoid in ſome ſort ſeeing what the World diſapproves, becauſe it is an Object or Spectacle which Vanity is not able to ſuffer.

XX.

I have ſaid that we ſhun it in ſome ſort, becauſe we do not ſhun it abſolutely. Truth always makes it ſelf a little light through all thoſe Clouds wherewith Men ſtrive to obſcure it: there paſs always ſome Rays which incommode Pride, and which trouble this falſe quiet which it endeavours to procure it ſelf. Theſe Opinions, which are grounded only upon a Voluntary Error, and never firm and ſure. They are always mixt with Miſtruſt, and conſequently with Melancholly, Trouble, and Moleſtation. So inſtead of this pure Joy, and this full and entire Satisfaction which Self-Love aimeth at, all it can do with all its wiles is to ſuſpend for ſome time the Sentiments of Sadneſs, which are nouriſhed at the bottom of the Heart, and which are always ready to ſeize thereon.

XXI.

Theſe are the Natural Sentiments of Self-Love, and the Addreſſes it makes uſe of to conceal our Faults, and to hinder People from telling us of them. And it is remarkable, that as it is in it ſelf a very great Fault not to ſee the Truth, ſo Self-Love does not allow it no more than others. Self-Love does not uſe leſs Artifice to diſguiſe it to others than to our ſelves. And therefore we ſee few or none who do not eſteem it an honour to love Truth, and who do grant ſincerely that they are not at quiet until it be diſcovered to them. We are offended with this reproach as much as with any

any other, and in a Word, we would have the Glory to love Truth, and the Satisfaction never to hear it.

But as theſe two Paſſions in ſome ſort do not hold together, we endeavour to accord them in giving ſomething to the one and to the other. It is true, that as it is Self-Love which cauſeth this difference, ſo it makes it very unequal. For it brings it about that we are never told of thoſe eſſential Faults, to which we are inclined by a quick and active Paſſion: that we diſſemble to thoſe which get us ill will from Men, and which would give occaſion to deſpiſe our ſelves, and to believe that 'tis with reaſon that others do ſlight us. All the Liberty therefore that we give to others upon this Subject, is to mind us of ſome ſmall Faults, which do not diſfigure the Image we have of our ſelves, and which ſuffers the whole Beauty thereof to remain. *Velut ſi egregio Impreſſos reprehendas Corpore nævos.*

So we ſuffer Men to declare their Opinions of a Diſcourſe, or of a Writing, which we have made to find fault therein with ſome Expreſſions not very Juſt, ſome bad Cadence, ſome Place neglected; conditionally nevertheleſs, that they eſteem the Deſign of it; the Judgment, the Oeconomy, and the other more eſſential Parts. We pardon likewiſe thoſe who advertiſe us of ſome want of Reſpect, of Management and other trifles of this Nature, provided they do not touch upon our principal Paſſions, and that all they obſerve in us may ſubſiſt with the eſteem and approbation of the generality. 'Tis on theſe Conditions, and at this rate we reſolve with our ſelves ſometimes to purchaſe Glory, love Truth, and give it ſome entrance; yet it muſt be Self-Love which opens it to it, and that it be accompanied with teſtimonies of Eſteem and Affection not to be ſlighted.

XXII.

In the Second Part we ſhall ſpeak more Particularly of the Ways Men uſe to hinder that Truth trouble them not, in the eſteem and love of themſelves. But

what we have already ſaid, may ſuffice to ſhew that we extend too much thoſe common Maxims, that Men naturally love Truth, that they have a Natural Averſion for what is Falſe, and that there being an Infinite of Perſons who would deceive others, there are none at all who would be deceived; ſeeing that it appears on the contrary, that the World is almoſt compoſed of nothing but wilful blind People, who hate and fly the Light, and who labour for nothing more than to deceive themſelves, and to entertain them in deluſion. Where is then this love of Truth, wherewith we flatter our ſelves, and what hatred for Falſity may be found in Men, who, according to the Scripture ſeek nothing elſe?

XXIII.

Nevertheleſs, we may ſay, that theſe Maxims have place in things Indifferent, in which Men taking no Intereſt at all, do not in effect love to be deceived, and prefer Truth before Falſity. The which ſhews ſome natural love for Truth. But it is ſeldom ſeen that this natural Inclination is free to act, and that the Mind is not prepoſſeſſed with ſome Paſſion which makes it incline more to one ſide than to another. There needs ſcarcely any thing to make Self-Love to deliberate. It makes Private and Secret Intereſts even things wherein it ſeems to have none at all. The leaſt Advance, the leaſt Engagements, the leaſt Inclination to pleaſe or to diſpleaſe ſuffice to take away the Ballance, and to incline the Minds, to ſeek out reaſons only on one ſide: How many are there, for Example, who have no reaſon to continue in an opinion, but becauſe there would be ſome trouble to examine the Contrary reaſons. They fly the pains of Inſtructing themſelves, becauſe it is laborious; They will Judge and Decide, becauſe they will appear Learned; and to ſatisfie at once theſe two Inclinations they ſuppoſe without other Examination, that what they have formerly learn'd is true. *Tædio novæ Curæ ſemel placita pro æternis ſervant.*

XXIV. The

XXIV.

The chief and principal uſe we make of this love of Truth, is, to perſuade us that what we love is true. For if we would do our ſelves Juſtice, we ſhould acknowledge that we love not things becauſe they are true, but that we believe them true, becauſe we love them. Our Minds are fixed to objects Independant of their Truth, and by the ſole relation of theſe Inclinations. But becauſe they cannot enjoy them, if they look upon them as Falſe, they endeavour in ſome ſort to add thereto the Idea of Truth, that they may be fixed thereunto more firmly. *Quicunque aliud amant, hoc quod amant volunt eſſe veritatem.* *Aug. Con. l. 10. 13.*

XXV.

We love Truth in general, as the common and general good. For as we can love nothing which we do not think good, likewiſe we can love nothing which we believe not to be true. But Self-Love knows very well how to conjoyn theſe General Inclinations with Particular Paſſions; And as it makes us believe that what we love is good, it makes us likewiſe believe, that what we love is true; that is to ſay, we cannot love what is falſe under its Proper and Natural form, and loving in effect many falſe and deceitful Objects, it finds means to repreſent them under the Image of Truth.

XXVI.

This averſion ſo Uniform and Conſtant which is found amongſt Men, for the Truth which diſcovers them to themſelves, and this Inclination ſo general of ſhunning the ſight of their Faults, as their greateſt misfortune gives way to believe that this common Maxim which calls them back to themſelves, and makes them to know themſelves, *Noſce teipſum*, proceeds not from a common Light perſuading them that this Knowledge is for their good, and which makes them deſire it, but that it

may well have its ſource in the Knowledge of every Man's Heart, who feeling himſelf incommodated with the Vanity, and the Injuſtice which he obſerves in others, perſuades him to ſeek and deſire for them, this Knowledge which he neither ſeeks nor deſires for himſelf.

XXVII.

This thought is ſo much more likely as nothing ſhocks us more in the Faults we obſerve in others, than the blindneſs wherein we ſee they are in regard of themſelves. What is there more troubleſome than a Vain Man who is taken up with nothing but himſelf, and who would have Men only to apply themſelves to him, who admires himſelf continually, and who imagines that others do the ſame, or that they are to blame if they do not? And who is he who hath not a great Inclination to tell Perſons of this Opinion, that they would do well to labour to know themſelves to draw themſelves out of thoſe Deluſions wherein they are? *Noſce teipſum?*

XXVIII.

The World is full of People, who obſerve other Men's Faults with an admirable Judgment, who pardon them nothing, and who being ſubject to the ſame, or to greater Faults themſelves, do not make the leaſt Reflection thereon. The Vaineſt Perſons moſt frequently laugh at other Mens Vanity. Thoſe who are Cheated, moſt laugh at thoſe whom they believe Deceived. The moſt Unjuſt reproach others of their Injuſtice: The ſharpeſt Men give ſweet Leſſons; The moſt Prejudiced Perſons ſpeak earneſtly againſt Prejudice: The moſt Opiniated are the firſt in accuſing others of Obſtinacy. It is very hard, not to have a deſire to adviſe theſe ſort of People that they ſpeak to themſelves in ſpeaking againſt others, and not to tell them at leaſt in their Heart: *Noſce teipſum.*

XXIX. When

XXIX.

When we ſee theſe ambitious Men, who heap Enterprizes upon Enterprizes, who form deſigns to which many lives would not ſatisfie, who trouble by their Caprichioes both their own and other Mens quiet, who never dream of Death which threatens them every Moment, who imagine that others live, only for them; who devour with an inſatiable Covetouſneſs other Mens Goods. Who is it that does not find himſelf inclined to recal them to the Knowledge of their Mortal Conditions, and to make them mindful that they are but Men?

We feel the ſame Motions in an infinite other rencounters, as when we ſee People, who for want of knowing themſelves, undertake things infinitely above them, and in which they cannot proſper; who will do all becauſe they judge and think themſelves capable of all, and who ſpoil all by their want of Parts; who glory in taking Counſel of no body; who complain to others of their bad ſucceſs that they have had by their Imprudence. In fine, as the Ignorance of ones ſelf is found almoſt in all Vices, and is moſt what ſhocks us therein, we ſhould every Moment endeavour to draw People out of their Deluſion in teaching them to know themſelves, if this Motive were not with-held by others more powerful.

XXX.

We have right methinks to conclude from what I ſaid but now, that this Precept, *Know thou thy ſelf*, in the Mouth of thoſe who have acted only by Self-Love, was rather the effect of Impatience and Vexation, ſtirred up by the Faults that they ſee in others, than by a clear ſight of the Neceſſity of this Knowledge for every Man in Particular, and for his proper Good. We would have others to know themſelves,

to the end they may act in a less shocking manner in regard of us: And yet we will not know our selves because we will not see in our selves what thwarts us therein, nor think our selves obliged to labour to correct some Faults, in which we are very glad to continue. We find means to foster our selves in our proper Delusion, in fixing our Thoughts only on certain Objects, and hiding others from our selves. But we find the Delusion of others very ridiculous, because we see in them what they will not see therein, and clearly perceive the Judgments that are made of them, of which they see but a part. We do not forbear nevertheless, to envy something the condition of those Persons so deceived, and to covet their place: But it is by fancying, that if we were there we could avoid the Faults we see in them, and that we could procure to our selves all that they wanted. And I know not if we would have it on condition to live in the same Delusion wherein we believe they do. For Men have light enough not to believe others happy by the possession of false Wealth, and they are not capable to place their happiness therein, but by banishing away the Thought that is false, and taking it for real.

XXXI.

It is true, our Understanding is not so blind but that having recall'd others by vexation to the Knowledge of themselves, it must conclude from thence in general, that it would be useful that every one should know himself, and apply to himself this Precept in giving it to others. We are also very glad to honour our selves in making a shew to be comprehended in the Precepts which we give to others. But these cold and speculative applications, are very far from forming an effective desire to labour to acquire this Knowledge; and lastly Humane Reasons, which might carry or incline us thereunto, are hardly able to make us surmount the Natural Disaffection we have thereunto. Whosoever looks

looks upon himſelf only in relation to this preſent Life, is always unfortunate, be it that he doth know or not know himſelf. He is more really ſo in not knowing himſelf, but he is more ſenſibly ſo in knowing himſelf; and the Senſible carries him ordinarily to the Real, becauſe it makes Impreſſion upon the Senſes, whereas the Inſenſible Realities act only upon the Reaſon. Now Reaſon, when it withſtands the Inclinations of Self-Love, is not of very great uſe in the Conduct of Life; and after all, Death which puts an end to all Imprudence, and all the Wiſdom of Men, renders the advantage of the one above the other ſo inconſiderable, that it takes away the deſire of ſeeking eagerly: Which made *Solomon* ſay to expreſs this Humane Opinion, *That he hath ſaid in himſelf: If I muſt die, what will it profit me to have applyed my ſelf to Wiſdom?* Every advantage which regards only this preſent Life is hardly worth the Pains we undergo to obtain it, becauſe this Life is only an inſtant which deſerves not to be deliberated on.

XXXII.

We ſhall not find then in our own Nature any inclination which doth move it to apply it ſelf to the Knowledge of its ſelf, nor ſufficient Motives which can make it deſire: But if we add thereto the Lights of Faith, the neceſſity of this Duty will appear ſo preſſing, that we ſhall have much ado to comprehend that there are any Chriſtians, who would live well in the ignorance of themſelves, and their eſtate. For this Faith teaches us, that it is in vain that we fly and avoid knowing our ſelves, that this ſight is unavoidable; ſeeing that God will open the Eyes of all Men that they may ſee themſelves ſuch as they are, but with this horrible difference, That thoſe who have been unwilling to know themſelves in this World, ſhall ſee whether they will or no themſelves Everlaſtingly with a Sight which ſhall fill them with Rage and Deſpair; Where-

as thoſe who have not avoided ſeeing themſelves in this Life, and who have laboured by this means to deſtroy in themſelves what is diſpleaſing to God, ſhall hereafter ſee nothing which may not be joyful to them, or rather they ſhall forget themſelves happily for Eternity, becauſe they will ſee nothing but God in themſelves and in all other Creatures. We have therefore only to chuſe either to endeavour to know our ſelves in this World, or to be for ever our own proper Torment. By making tryal of this terrible Threat God pronounces againſt the Wicked. *Arguam te & ſtatuam contra faciem tuam*, I will reprehend thee, and place thee before thy own Face.

XXXIII.

What deſpair will that be of a miſerable Soul, who having avoided all her Life ſeeing and knowing her ſelf, ſhall be at once fixed and glued to this Object for all Eternity, without hope of ever being able to divert her ſelf for one ſingle Moment, who ſhall have continually before her Eyes all her Crimes, not being able to deſtroy them, nor to avoid ſeeing them. This is the Inevitable puniſhment of this Voluntary forgetfulneſs of ones ſelf. We muſt labour ſincerely either to know our ſelves during this Life, or to know our ſelves eternally in the other in this horrible manner. There is no Mean, neither Reaſon nor Faith have doubtleſs any trouble to deliberate. But as we are carried to this Forgetfulneſs by a very violent weight, and which doth overpoiſe almoſt all the World, it is neceſſary to fortifie our Faith and to maintain our Reaſon by all the conſiderations which may diſcover to us the advantages of this Knowledge, as are theſe which ſhall be mentioned hereafter.

XXXIV. We

XXXIV.

We may ſay, that as the not knowing of ones ſelf is the Source or Fountain of all Vices, the knowledge thereof is the Ground or Foundation of Virtues. And we need not only conſider the nature of each Virtue to be perſuaded thereof. What means, for example, to be truly humble without knowing ones ſelf? or rather, What is Humility but a knowledge of ones Sins, of ones Miſeries, and of ones Unworthineſs, which makes one abject in his own thoughts, and judge himſelf worthy of all ſorts of Abaſements? This is the definition which St. *Bernard* gives thereof. *Humilitas virtus eſt, quâ homo veriſſimâ ſui Cognitione ſibi ipſe vileſcit.* The ſight of our Faults is therefore the foundation of Humility, and 'tis at the ſame time that which preſerves it. 'Tis preſently loſt if we only obſerve our Virtues whether they be true or falſe. Strange conditions of Mans Soul to whom ſickneſs it ſelf is neceſſary, that ſhe may not die! She is almoſt void of all good, and cannot ſee the little that remains without danger of loſing it.

XXXV.

The knowledge of our ſelves doth not humble us ſimply in reſpect of God. It hinders alſo, that we do not raiſe our ſelves above our Neighbour, there being nothing but the forgetfulneſs of our ſelves which is able to make us contemn and deſpiſe him. One ſick Perſon never inſults over another, but in forgetting his own ſickneſs, and as one is always full of ſweetneſs towards ones ſelf, he never uſeth others hardly but in diſtinguiſhing himſelf from them. And this is it which the knowledge of our ſelves doth not permit us to do, ſeeing that it always diſcovers to us either the ſame faults in us, or the roots thereof, and makes us feel the weight which we ſhould undergo if Gods grace did not

not permit it. Therefore the Apoſtle in recommending us to reprove with ſweetneſs thoſe who ſin *in ſpiritu lenitatis*, recalls us to the knowledge of our weakneſs, and the danger wherein we are of falling every moment: *Ne & tu tenteris.* Behold the Source of Meekneſs and of Humility towards ones Neighbour.

XXXVI.

Man is ſo weak and ſo vain, that he is equally carried to Pride by the ſight of Virtue, which he thinks he hath, and by that of faults which he obſerves in others. By the one he raiſeth himſelf in his own opinion above them. By the other he humbleth them, and bringeth them under him. But the knowledge of ones ſelf preſerves both the one and the other; and in placing ones proper faults before ones Eyes, it ſtifles on one part the complacency that it may have in his Virtue, and it renders the other more Indulgent to anothers faults. So it keeps him at leaſt at a level with other Men: It teacheth him to bear them as he would be born with by them, and it makes alſo in ſome manner a good uſe of Self-love.

XXXVII.

The forgetfulneſs of ones ſelf produceth Obdurateneſs, and by a contrary effect the knowledge of ones ſelf produceth Piety. For there is in the ſentiments of Compaſſion for others ſome ſecret reflections upon our ſelves, by which we look upon our ſelves either as having ſuffered the ſame evils, or as being liable to ſuffer them.

Non ignara mali miſeris ſuccurrere diſco.

And it is this which makes Men who believe they are above others, and who imagine the evils wherewith others are afflicted, cannot happen to them, are for the moſt

moſt part hard hearted, becauſe they make not upon themſelves theſe kind of reflections, which ſoften the Heart in conſideration of anothers evil.

It is the ſame with the moſt part of Injuſtices we do to others. They come ordinarily from a blindneſs, which makes us never blame our ſelves, but think that we are exempt from all faults and miſdemeanors, we lay the blame all upon others. So that nothing contributes ſo much to make us juſt and equitable towards others as the knowledge of our ſelves. 'Tis that makes us diſcover in the bottom of our Hearts the impreſſion of the Law of Nature which forbids us to do to others, what we would not they ſhould do to us. 'Tis that which diſperſes all the Clouds wherewith Self love doth obſerve this rule in the rencounters wherein it is concerned. 'Tis this which hinders us likewiſe from complaining with eagerneſs of the diſadvantageous Judgments Men form of us, and of the Injuſtices Men may do us, in convincing us, that oftentimes we deal ſo with others without taking care thereof. In fine, 'tis this which ſuppreſſeth *Mens* Inſolence, and Haughtineſs, and placing a very lively Image of their Miſeries before their Eyes, deſtroys the moſt ordinary cauſe of Injuſtices which they do to others.

XXXVIII.

The ſight of our faults in ſuppreſſing our Pride, ſuppreſſeth alſo the Conſequences of it, and all the Paſſions wherewith it mingles it ſelf, and as there are few whereof it is not the ſource, there are alſo few whereof this ſight is not the remedy. A Man who knows himſelf well, is ſcarcely emulous, becauſe he is convinced that he deſerves nothing, and therefore he does not believe that the honour which is given to others is due to him.

He is neither ſharp nor vindicative, becauſe the ſmall eſteem that he hath of himſelf, doth not make him take or reckon the offences Men do to him as things of moment. He

He cannot hate any Man, becauſe he cannot hate himſelf, and ſees nevertheleſs nothing in others that he does not acknowledge in himſelf in ſome degree.

He is not very ambitious, and he cannot form deſigns to raiſe himſelf in the World; becauſe theſe deſigns ſpring from a belief we have, that we deſerve the rank whereto we aſpire, and do think that we have more cunning and induſtry than others to arrive thereunto. Now a Man who knows himſelf well, doth not flatter himſelf with theſe thoughts.

He does not conceive moreover this elevation as a great good. He perceives that theſe paſſions may render him very miſerable in ſome condition. That his Covetouſneſs would exceed its limits more, if it had more means to ſatisfie it ſelf, and in the uncertainty wherein he is, whether it would be good or bad for him, he eaſily concludes to keep himſelf in the places wherein he finds himſelf.

XXXIX.

That Poverty which *Jeſus Chriſt* hath made the firſt of the Beatitudes, and which is praiſed in ſo many places in Scripture, is nothing elſe but an humble knowledge of ones ſelf. For to be poor in this manner, one muſt know that he is ſo, and able to ſay with the Prophet, *Ego vir videns paupertatem tuam.* That is to ſay, that we ought to know in us either the lack of goods which we have not, or the lack of all right to the goods which we hold from God's liberality, which includes an intire knowledge of our ſelves.

XL.

It is eaſie to comprehend how this knowledge doth make us more patient in reſpect of the evils which are purely opinion; as unfavourable judgments which are made of us, calumnies, and falſities. For it is clear, that knowledge ought to leſſen the ſenſe thereof by the

the ſight it gives us of our effective miſery, which yet is much more great then all that Man can ſay of it. But we do not ſee at firſt how this knowledge of our Miſeries and Faults may ſerve us to be more patient in outward Evils, in Loſſes, in Diſgraces, in Sickneſs, in Griefs. We might alſo believe that it would be a new Charge which would only be proper to overwhelm the Soul by ſadneſs and deſpair. Yet it is not ſo, for if this ſight of our faults be a burthen, 'tis a burthen which comforts one in all other afflic[illegible] his forces, cauſe it diſcovers to us that they are juſt, that [illegible]tion which tioned to our inward evils, and that they may ſerve as a remedy thereunto; that it convinces us that proſperity would not have been leſs dangerous than adverſity, and that giving us leave to reflect upon all that is arrived to us in our life of good and evil, it makes us to ſee that we have yet more abuſed our ſelves with good than evil, and that we are charged more ſtrictly therewith in the ſight of God.

XLI.

It is yet eaſier to comprehend how much the knowledge of ones ſelf doth contribute to Prudence. For the moſt part of enterpriſes ill managed, and deſigns raſhly undertaken ſpring from the preſumption of thoſe who form them; and this preſumption comes from a blindneſs wherein they are in reſpect of themſelves. There is nothing more frequent than theſe indiſcretions in particular actions, and they all ſpring for the moſt part from the principal action of life, which is the choice of the State and Employment wherein every one ought to paſs his time. For it is this wherein the ignorance of our ſelves make us to commit the greateſt faults.

There is no Man ſo diſgraced by Nature who cannot find in the order of the World a place proportioned to the ſtrength of his Mind and Body, but the ſmall knowledge which he hath of himſelf is the cauſe that moſt people make a bad choice. Let us make reflection on

thoſe who take upon them the Charges and Employments of this World, and the Places that they enjoy, and we ſhall ſcarcely find any one well placed. How many are there who having Arms and no Head do chuſe Employments which have need of a Head and not of Arms? How many are there who being born to obey, and not to govern, do poſſeſs Places where there is need of Commanding and not of Obeying? How many that ingage themſelves in Offices which are above their Sphere, their P[redacted] above their Virtue? And how few [redacted]ſelves from them by the knowledge of their Incapacities? Every one thinks he is able, and only limits his pretentions by the debility wherein he finds himſelf of being raiſed to a higher pitch. This is the moſt common Source of Worldly Diſorders, and of the Evils that befall both Church and State, and likewiſe of each particular. For 'tis not poſſible that a Perſon ill placed, and who wants neceſſary qualities to acquit himſelf of the Employments wherein he is engaged, ſhould not commit a world of faults, and theſe faults which are the ſequels of his temerity and preſumption, do render him ridiculous in this World, and everlaſtingly miſerable in the other.

XLII.

The ſole knowledge of ones ſelf may ſupply the defect of Talents, and the ſole defect of this knowledge on the contrary renders all theſe Talents uſeleſs, dangerous, and pernicious to him who hath them. 'Tis no great harm to have neither Memory, Underſtanding, Conduct, Science, Induſtry, nor Ability, provided that one know it; Let him borrow of ſome other what he hath not, and undertake nothing which requires thoſe qualities which God hath not pleaſed to beſtow upon him. A Man with all theſe Imperfections, in applying himſelf only to that which is proportioned to his ability, is Praiſe-worthy, ſeeing that he may become a Saint, and that he is often more acceptable to God

God than thoſe who have all the qualities which he wants. He is only deprived of them for a moment, that is, for this preſent life, and he hath as much right as any Man to hope he may be partaker of them in the other. But let us ſuppoſe all theſe Talents in one Man, and as much light and underſtanding as we will, if with theſe he does not know himſelf in his imperfections, and in his weakneſſes, all theſe qualities will prove only his fall and ruine, and often alſo in this World. If he cannot meaſure his enterpriſes by his forces, he will enter into raſh engagements and preſumption which hath no boundaries, not being check'd by the reins of the knowledge of ones ſelf, will carry him away to dangerous exceſſes.

XLIII.

One may add to theſe particular reaſons this general one, which ought to make more impreſſion upon our Minds, and add thereto more horrour of this blindneſs, That as the common puniſhment of the Condemned in the other Life will be to ſee themſelves, *Arguam te, & ſtatuam contra faciem tuam*; the general Character of the Condemned in this here is not to ſee themſelves: ſo that it is equally true that we enter not into Heaven unleſs we know our ſelves, and into Hell becauſe we do not know our ſelves.

The Death of Sin which is the cauſe of Eternal Death, is accompanied always with a kind of misfortunate drouſineſs which deprives us of the knowledge of our condition, and therefore the Prophet earneſtly beſeeched God, *That he would enlighten his Eyes to the end that he might not ſleep in Death*, becauſe he knew very well that this Death was inſeparable from that drowſineſs, and that provided he did not ſleep he ſhould not dye. *Illumina occulos meos, ne unquam obdormiam in morte.* The State that Sin reduceth Man to is ſo horrible that he would not ſuffer it, if he ſaw it but, and ſo Men whom Pleaſure draws thereunto find means to hide

hide it from themſelves by a thouſand inventions which they are miſerably ingenious to find out.

XLIV.

One of the moſt criminal ones, and yet the commoneſt is to ſtifle in ones ſelf the ſight which condemns theſe diſorders, in juſtifying them to their faces by falſe rules which authoriſeth them. 'Tis the Origin of ſo many Errors in Morality, and of ſo many bad Maxims which Men have always endeavoured to introduce into the Church, and principally in theſe latter times. For Men not being willing to render their actions conform to the Law of God, have endeavoured to render the Laws of God conform to their actions. In ſtead of redreſſing their corrupt inclinations according to the exactneſs of this Divine rule, they have endeavoured to ſtrain this rule, even to adjuſt it to their inclinations. They will not only follow their own Intereſts and Paſſions, but they will alſo be approved in their Intereſts and Paſſions, nor will they permit that their Conſciences reproach them of being unjuſt. So that things not anſwering their expectation in the Maxims which God hath given us for our guide, if they did leave them in their Purity, they have endeavoured to alter them, to find therein this approbation which they ſeek, and to appeaſe by this means the trouble of their Conſcience. 'Tis thus, that by the favour of theſe falſe lights, which they willingly take for true ones, they ſettle themſelves in this unfortunate Peace and Quiet, which is properly the ſleepineſs which the Prophet beſeeched God to be preſerved from by the Rays of the true light.

XLV.

What if they cannot ſucceed to hide entirely this light which condemns them, they have recourſe to other means to weaken the effect of it, and to hinder the impreſſion

preſſion which it would be able to make upon them. Sometimes in letting the Law ſubſiſt, they are contented not to think of it, never comparing their actions therewith, nor ever looking on them unleſs with contrary faces, which do not repreſent to them what they have defective. If they cannot ſtop the ſight of this oppoſition entirely which they have to the Laws of God, they weaken and diminiſh the *Idea* of it in joyning themſelves to an infinite of people which they condemn as well as themſelves, as if this croud of Criminals was capable to defend them againſt God. Laſtly, if they do not diſguiſe the Laws of God, they diſguiſe themſelves to themſelves. They attribute to themſelves motives and intentions which they have not, and will not ſee thoſe they have. Thus in having a falſe judgment of their actions, they juſtifie themſelves during their whole life by the means of this voluntary deluſion. Behold the ſleepineſs we muſt deſire to be preſerved from, and what every honeſt well-meaning Man ought to reſiſt all his life by endeavouring to know himſelf, and by embracing all means which may help him therein, and which we are going to ſhew in this ſecond Part.

Of the Knowledge of ones Self.

Second Part.

Containing Means to Acquire it.

WE have endeavoured in the firſt Part of this Treatiſe, only to make the Knowledge of ones Self deſired. We ſuppoſe in this here that deſire quite formed and joyned to a ſincere Reſolution of labouring to Acquire this Knowledge. There is nothing more to be done but to put thoſe who are ſo well diſpoſed, into the way that leads to it, and to open to them the moſt proper Means to attain thereunto; And we may firſt tell them, that this deſire is one of the Principalleſt of them, and that it would ſuffice to produce this effect if it were full and entire. For there is this difference betwixt this Knowledge and that of Objects which are out of us, we may be ignorant of other things, how deſirous ſoever we may be to know them; but we continue not in the Ignorance of our ſelves, but only becauſe we do not deſire abſolutely to forſake it, and we nouriſh in the bottom of our Hearts a ſecret diſowning of Truth. It is this which in us oppoſes the Light of God, and hinders it from penetrating our Underſtandings. Without that it would make us ſee clearly

clearly into all the folds of our Hearts; it would advertiſe us of all our dangers, and we ſhould have need of no other thing to make us know our ſelves perfectly, but to expoſe our ſelves to theſe Divine Beams.

II.

We have ſhewn in the firſt Part that this miſerable Inclination was become natural to Man ſince ſin, and we muſt add here, that Grace never deſtroys it abſolutely; and that whatſoever deſire it inſpires us with not to blind our ſelves, there reſts always, as we may ſay, in the bottom of the Old Man, an Inclination towards this Voluntary blindneſs which is obſerved by theſe words of *Jeſus Chriſt*, *That every man who does ill, hates the light, and comes not to the light, that his Works may not be known.* For as there is no Man who doth not incline to Evil, conſequently there is none who hath not ſome averſion for the Light which diſcovers it to him. But alſo as that inclination to Evil, which Sin hath Imprinted in our Souls, doth not hinder God from Imprinting therein, by his grace, a contrary Inclination, which inclines us to Good and to Juſtice. This natural diſowning which we have of Truth hinders not God from breathing into us a contrary Inclination, which makes us love and ſearch Truth. We are only obliged to acknowledge that our Heart is divided, that we love not abſolutely Truth, that there are two oppoſite weights and inclinations in us; ſo that if we have reaſon to give thanks to God becauſe he hath given us ſome love for Truth, we have alſo reaſon to humble our ſelves in beholding our ſelves, according to this other Inclination, as Enemies to this ſame Truth.

Omnis qui male agit odit lucem, non venit ad lucem ut non manifeſtentur opera ejus.

III.

There is nothing that makes us better to comprehend the greatneſs of Mans diſorder than the ſight of this miſerable Propenſity we feel in our ſelves. For God being the Truth, the Light, the Juſtice; to hate the Light, the Truth, the Juſtice, is to hate God himſelf. Nevertheleſs Man hates them. He would gladly that this Truth were not, that this light were extinguiſhed, and that this Juſtice were aboliſht; that is to ſay, he would that there were no God. He wiſheth that there were an annihiliation of it, and not being able to deſtroy it in his proper being, he deſtroys it as much as he can for himſelf by ſhutting his Eyes againſt the ſight of Truth.

Behold that condition in which we are not only born, but wherein yet we are partly engaged, and from whence we ought to endeavour to free our ſelves by leſſening as much as we ſhall be able this natural averſneſs we have for Truth, and by labouring to increaſe in us what God hath given us of love for it. It is good to exerciſe our ſelves more about this work to convince our ſelves of the weakneſs of this love. We may eaſily do it in conſidering how much a perfect and ſincere love, of which the Heart is poſſeſſed, as is that of an Uſurer for his Money, is different from the love we have, or that we flatter our ſelves to have for the Truth.

IV.

An Uſurer inclines continually towards gain; the means that are given him thereof enter always without reſiſtance, they are alway received with a ſincere Joy, and without oppoſition. There needs no ſtudied management nor moderation to make them agreeable. Every Man is welcome to propoſe them Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances, Strangers, Inferiors, Equals, Superiors;

periors; and he is far from conceiving any bitterneſs againſt thoſe who make him any Overture to increaſe his Wealth, it would be a certain means to ſweeten him if he were angry at them. He does not amuſe himſelf in finding out reaſons to reject theſe advices, nor ever takes occaſion to examin the defects of thoſe who give them. He is not ſcrupulous in manners, in the behaviour, in the intentions. He only ſeeks to aſſure himſelf of the truth of what hath been told him, and examining it ſincerely, he fears nothing but being deceived therein.

Behold in what manner we ought to love Truth, and the Model the Wiſe Man propoſeth to us, in ordering us to ſeek it as Money; and we may ſee there that we love it ſo little and ſeek it ſo imperfectly, that the contrary of what we ſaid of this Uſurer may be ſaid of us.

For our Hearts are hardly ever open on that ſide Truth preſents it ſelf. It finds there always reſiſtance, and never enters but by violence and force; and if ſometimes it be in appearance gratefully received, it is always with ſome inward remorſe of ſome ſuperficial joy, with which we diſtinguiſh it. No Man is proper to make us know it, and ſelf-love is almoſt never wanting to furniſh us with reproaches againſt thoſe who undertake it. Rhetorick hath neither Cunning nor Delicateneſs enough to inſinuate it without hurting us. We always find exceſs in the things, defects in the Grace, in the manner, and in the time; and in ſtead of applying our Mind ſincerely to the examination of what is propoſed to us, we apply it only in an unprofitable ſearch of their defects who hath given theſe Counſels. This is the portraiture of the Spirit, and the Conduct of the moſt part of Men. The lineaments are more obſerved in ſome than in others, but there are very few in whom ſome foot-ſteps of them do not appear.

V.

At leaſt let us not flatter our ſelves with a Virtue which we have not, and let us beware of ſaying, as many do, *That we deſire nothing ſo much as to know our ſelves, and that they can do us no greater pleaſure than to help us therein.* Let us on the contrary acknowledge, that it would be to give to our ſelves a praiſe which ſurpaſſeth Man, and which could be nothing but the effect of our Vanity and our Blindneſs: So that the firſt ſtep we ſhall make to get out of it is to acknowledge ſincerely the oppoſition we feel in our ſelves againſt this ſelf knowledge, and to weep for it before God, as being one of our greateſt misfortunes.

VI.

The ſecond ſtep which is no leſs eſſential is to acknowledge the impoſſibility we have of proſpering in this ſearch, without the aſſiſtance of Gods light. Becauſe there is only this light which is able to diſſipate the clouds which cover our Hearts, and it is only by means of it that we are capacitated to judge truly of what we diſcover therein, our motions being good or bad as they are for or againſt Truth, which is the rule of them. Laſtly, there is none but God who can give us a knowledge of our ſelves, which is moderate to the juſt proportion our infirmity requires; that which we are able to procure purely by Human force, being ſometimes as dangerous as the ignorance it ſelf of our State and Condition, becauſe it is able to diſcourage the Soul, and bring her to a kind of Deſpair: whereas that which God gives her, upholds her at the ſame time that the other dejects her, and never ſhrinks back at the ſight of her Miſeries, but is raiſed again by hope in the Mercy of God.

VII.

VII.

But this perſuaſion, That we ought not to expect this knowledge ſo neceſſary except from the pure Grace of God, doth in no manner exclude the reflections we muſt make to obtain it. For Grace is often hid under theſe reflections, and makes uſe thereof to make theſe lights enter into our Minds. Therefore we muſt act in reſpect of this important Point of Chriſtian Life as in all others. That is to ſay, we muſt demand it of God as dependant on him only, and labour to get it as if it did depend only on our care: And it is in this conſideration that we ſhall give here ſome Overtures which may be uſeful in this Enquiry.

VIII.

There are two ſorts of knowledge of Man, the one general, the other particular. The firſt diſcovers what happens to all Men in the ſtate of Sin wherein they are born; the other teacheth us what we have added to this common Corruption. Becauſe though it may be the ſame in all at the Root, it takes nevertheleſs infinite ſeveral Shapes, accordingly as the Soul forſakes them more or leſs, and that Concupiſcence being limited and excited by Occaſions and Objects, diffuſeth it ſelf more on the one ſide than the other, ſo that by this different mixture of particular diſorders, it forms it ſelf as many ſeveral Diſeaſes and Conditions, as there are different Souls.

It is, without doubt, to this particular knowledge of our condition that we ought to incline. For it would help little or nothing to contemplate the general Portraiture of the corruption of Nature, if we make not uſe of it to trace out our own, ſeeing that it may be a means to cure us particularly, and not Men generally. But the knowledge of the common condition of Men is nevertheleſs very uſeful, and comprehends likewiſe the

greateſt part of this particular knowledge which we ſeek. For theſe Defects and theſe Vices do not ceaſe, for being common, to be the Vices and Defects of each of us; they ſubſiſt not in the Air, nor in ſome being ſeparated from us. They are in us, and render each of us as miſerable as if none other had them.

IX.

We cannot propoſe a more proper Image to preſent the State of Man corrupted by Sin than that which the Scripture uſeth to expreſs that of *Jeruſalem* by, in ſaying, That from the Head to the Foot there was not in it one ſound part; *a planta pedis uſque ad Verticem, non eſt in ea Sanitas.* Let us then imagin an univerſal Wound, or rather, a heap of Sores, Plagues, and Ulcers, wherewith Mans Body is covered over in a horrid and frightful manner; Let there be amongſt theſe Sores ſome that ſeem to be more venomous and enflamed; others that look as it were dead and without heat, but that have nevertheleſs this which is common, that they may all become Mortal, theſe ſame which ſeem almoſt cured being able to enflame themſelves afreſh by divers inward and outward cauſes ſufficient to produce this effect, this Man having no means or force to hinder it. Behold the Image of the State wherein we are born, and what we are by Nature. The love of our ſelves, which is the Center and Fountain of all our Maladies, gives us a violent inclination for Pleaſures, for Promotion, for all that doth nouriſh our Curioſity, to fill up thereby the terrible vacuity which the loſs of our true Happineſs hath cauſed in our Hearts. And this Inclination diſpoſes us to procure theſe three Objects of our Deſires, by all ſorts of means, how unjuſt and how criminal ſoever they may be.

But as theſe Objects are changed a thouſand ways, acting more or leſs upon our Imaginations and our Senſes, the motives by which the Soul is ſwayed thereto are alſo very different: And it is that which makes the

the variety of our Paſſions. Therefore the divers aſſemblings and the ſeveral degrees make the difference of the particular humours and diſpoſitions of Men. Some are more Criminal, others more Innocent according to their Objects; ſome more lively, others more languiſhing, according as they behave themſelves. There are ſome likewiſe which appear abſolutely extinguiſhed, becauſe the Heart is Lorded over by a contrary Paſſion. And theſe are the Wounds without inflammation, and almoſt cured, whereof we were ſpeaking even now. But we muſt not rely thereon abſolutely; For they never are ſo well cloſed up, but that they may be venomed again. How far ſoever we may be from certain Vices, there remains always nevertheleſs in us inclination enough to make us fall therein, if God did permit that the thoughts which might diſſuade us ſhould be taken away from our Mind, that the Objects which might incline us thereunto ſhould act lively upon us, and laſtly that there ſhould be a heap of outward Circumſtances able to provoke our Concupiſcence, and to turn it on that ſide, which hath occaſioned St. *Auguſtine* to eſtabliſh this fine Rule, *That of all the Sins that Men commit, there is not one that another Man would not commit, if he were not aſſiſted by Him who made Man. Nullum Peccatum facit homo, quod non facit alius homo, ſi non adjuvet Rector a quo factus eſt homo.*

X.

Let us therefore never flatter our ſelves with a clear exemption from any Vices, and acknowledge in us this unfortunate aptneſs to all the Crimes and Diſorders of Men. Let this conſideration never permit us to raiſe our ſelves above any one whomſoever. Let it humble us by all the diſorders and by all the defects which we ſhall obſerve in others, being that they are ours in ſome ſort by an inclination we have thereunto, and by an impoſſibility we are in of ſecuring our ſelves from them unleſs God preſerve us. Thus the Hiſtory of Man

Man which comprehends almoſt nothing but that of their Paſſions, their weakneſs, and their diſorders, will in ſome ſort become our own Hiſtory; and whereas it is for the moſt part of People only a vain and idle recreation, it will be for us, if we will conſider it in this ſenſe, a very ſolid Inſtruction, which will continually ſet our faults before our Eyes, and make us acknowledge either that which we are really, or what we may come to if God leaves us to our ſelves.

XI.

It is by theſe reflections which we ought to make without intermiſſion upon all we ſee, and learn by Mens diſorders, that we muſt endeavour to conceive more diſtinctly the corruption of our Nature. For it does not juſtifie to have only a confuſed and a general *Idea* of it, like thoſe we have already drawn. We muſt conſider particularly the ſeveral parts and the effects that depend thereon, and ſtrive to know throughly the injuſtice, the vanity, and the weakneſs of the nature of Man, the progreſs and the effects of his Paſſions, in applying our ſelves always to theſe common knowledges, and not contenting our ſelves to acknowledge ſimply that we have the Root and the Source of theſe defects, endeavour moreover to diſcover what theſe Roots have produced in us, and even to what degree they are living.

XII.

But as the diſorder and injuſtice of Man are only deprivations of the order wherein he ought to be, and of the juſtice in which he ought to remain firm, it is clear that it cannot be known as it ought to be, whileſt we are ignorant of this Order and this Juſtice, that is to ſay, of the Divine and Eternal Laws which rule and govern Mens Duties, and from whence they cannot be ſeparated without falling into diſorder and injuſtice,

juſtice. But it is not here in this place that we intend to treat of it throughly, it is rather the ſubſtance abſolutely of Morality than of a ſmall Writing like this here; and we will content our ſelves to propoſe in general ſome advices to avoid in the ſtudy we muſt make all our lives, the voluntary digreſſions, and the crafty and ſubtil fetches wherein the averſion for Truth doth ingage us unknown to our ſelves, or rather without acknowledging that we were aware of them.

XIII.

Amongſt the Rules which preſcribe Mens Duties, and concerning which they ſhall be judged, there are ſome generally known, as for Example, That Murder, Theft, Adultery, Fornication, Falſe Witneſſes, are Actions very Criminal; and others on the contrary concerning which there is ſome difference betwixt thoſe who engage themſelves in the deciding theſe kind of Queſtions.

I do not by this difference pretend to take away the certainty and evidence of theſe conteſted Rules. For I know that there are ſome which are no leſs clear and certain than Principles the moſt generally received by all Men, and of which Rules there is no doubt, but by miſtake of application or by blindneſs of Paſſion and Malice. I will only mark the Fact, and diſtinguiſh the truths of Morality in theſe two Claſſes, by relation not to their real evidence, but to the effective diſpoſition of Men, who have embraced the one unanimouſly, and who are divided in regard of the other.

I place likewiſe in the ſame rank with theſe conteſted Rules thoſe, which although little oppugn'd by Writings and Diſcourſe, are nevertheleſs by practice, and which many who would paſs and be thought to lead a Chriſtian-like life, do not forbear to violate by their carriages, not ceaſing, for all that, to find out Confeſſors who do tolerate them, or who do approve them, and without loſing the eſteem of Perſons who

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are very regular. There are, for example, very few Confeſſors who would authoriſe, by a formal deciſion, Balls, Comedies, Romances, the immodeſt manner Women dreſs themſelves in now a-days, the uſe that is made commonly of the Goods belonging to the Church, the ſeeking after Eccleſiaſtical Dignities. Nevertheleſs ſeeing that ſo many, who have ſome Conſcience, make no ſcruple of all theſe things, there muſt needs be Confeſſors who find nothing to ſay againſt them, and who believe them not obliged to forſake them.

XIV.

Whoſoever deſires to know himſelf ought to be Inſtructed and well Verſed in theſe two kinds of Truths, ſeeing that it is thereby that he ought to judge of himſelf and his condition. And it is very eaſie to do it in the reſpect of the firſt; becauſe there's no need but that we ſeriouſly wiſh it. Theſe Truths are expoſed to all thoſe who deſire to be informed of them; they are to be found every where. But if it is eaſie to learn them after a ſpeculative manner, it is not ſo eaſie to make uſe of them as a light to diſcover the very bottom of the Heart, and to judge of our actions. Becauſe ſelf-love, which cannot hinder them always from entring into the Memory, acts ſo that they continue fruitleſs therein, that is to ſay, that they never ſerve for Rules to us, that we never compare our action with them, that we never draw the moſt natural and certain conſequences from them, that they never come into our mind but when we are compelled to diſcourſe of them; and laſtly, that we look upon them not different from thoſe Opinions of the ancient Philoſophers, which we are glad to keep as a Pledge in our Memory as Points of Knowledge and Erudition, but by which we do not think to rule our Lives.

This diſpoſition of our Hearts muſt be conſidered as one of our greateſt Miſchiefs, making Truth, which ſhould

ſhould be the remedy, to ſerve only to augment them by the bad uſage we make of its light. For not being given us but as our Guide, we become unjuſt Poſſeſſors of it, when we do not uſe it for this end. We ought therefore to attempt all means to remedy this evil; and ſo how remote ſoever we may imagin our ſelves from Truth, it is neceſſary that we force our ſelves to draw nearer to it, and make uſe of it as a Torch to ſearch in the moſt hidden corners of our Soul [illegible]ved, and [illegible] be contrary thereto. [illegible] able to

XV.

But if Self-love have ſubtilty enough to ſtop in the moſt part of the World the effect of the moſt conſtant Truths, and whereof we are the moſt convinced, it does yet ſhift off more eaſily thoſe which are diſputed, either by contrary Opinions formally maintained, or by an oppoſite practice. For it is the cauſe either that people, remaining in a doubt, do nevertheleſs act as if they were very certain of what they muſt believe in that diſagreement of Opinions, or that they do define for that Party which favoureth their inclinations by ſo frivilous reaſons that they are aſhamed to tell them when they are obliged, or that they blindly follow the example of others, without ſo much as ever examining whether this example be ſatisfactory or not, or whether they may be freed from it before God in alledging to him that they have followed the common tract; and at laſt they know ſo well how to ſtop in this point their curioſity, that they apprehend nothing more than to ſee it too clearly.

It is not my deſign to decide here any of theſe Points which I have called Conteſted, becauſe there may be found Perſons in the Church who oppoſe them, either as their Opinions, or as practicing them. I ſay only that the Quiet wherein thoſe live who follow ſome baſe Opinions without ever having examined them ſeriouſly, is viſibly unreaſonable, and cannot come

come except from the corruption of the Heart, from a hatred for Truth, and from a deſire which they have to ſatisfie their Paſſions, not being troubled for it by remorſe of Conſcience; and laſtly from a fear of being obliged to condemn themſelves in reſpect of the time paſt, and to change their manner of living for the time to come. 'Tis that which ſtifles their fear, and hinders them from having, in regard of their ſalv[redacted]ame ſentiments which they approved in [redacted] of all other things. If ſome able Phyſicians did tell them that ſuch certain Meats were poiſoned, they would willingly abſtain from eating of them, before they were aſſured that theſe Phyſicians were miſtaken. If they had notice given them, That there was a deſign of taking away their Lives, that the Houſes were on Fire, they would give little or no belief to thoſe who ſhould tell them the contrary, without bringing them very good proof; they would not be wanting to dive into the bottom of theſe advices, nor could they be at quiet with themſelves until they ſhould be abſolutely cleared of the truth thereof. From whence happens it then, that when they hear that rational and underſtanding Perſons are convinced, That ſome things they practice are not permitted, that they are capable to deſtroy them, that they are Condemned by the Law of God, as being Crimes, they are nevertheleſs ſo little moved thereat, that all ſeems to aſſure them? From whence comes it that they take ſo little pains to examin to the bottom the occaſion of this Judgment or Opinion which is againſt them, or to diſcourſe any of thoſe who are perſwaded of it, but that they ſtop at certain ſuperficial reaſons, and that provided they ſee themſelves Authorized by a Rabble, whom other times they eſteem very little either for Judgment or Piety, they think they have nothing to fear? Who ſees not that 'tis their Paſſion that ſuſpends their Reaſon, and hides from them the moſt common rules of Senſe, which they cannot hinder themſelves from ſeeing, if they were not as it were

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tied by their Heart, which fears to be disturbed in its Inclinations?

That which we ought to do to avoid this disorder so visible and so proper to cast us into, and keep us in blindness, is to establish, for an inviolable Principle of our Conduct, Never to follow in the practical any of those opinions favourable to the inclination of Nature, and which are condemned by able Men, unless we be fully assured that these Men be deceived, and in an Excess of security. Otherwise we shall not be able to free our selves from rashness, and the unadvised Acts which we commit by following a Rule so prepostrous ought to be a warning for us that we deceive not our selves even in the bottom, and that 'tis the aversion we have for Truth that hinders us from acknowledging it.

XVII.

It would not be sufficient to advance in the knowledge of ones self to be only instructed in the Principles of Truth, by which we ought to judge of our Actions, and of our State and Condition. Because, provided that we had never so little Sincerity to make the application of it, 'twould not be possible at least that our gross Faults should remain absolutely unknown to us. But to form to our selves the *Idea* which ought to be had thereof, there must be added to the knowledge of Gods Laws that of his Grandeur, of his Bounty, the infinite Obligations we have to him, the Right which he hath over Men in quality of Creator and Redeemer. There must be added the necessary Consequences of Sin, and we must look upon our selves as Sinners reduced to the last degree of unworthiness and annihiliation. *Vide Domine, & considera, quoniam sum vilis*; As deserving that all Creatures rise up against us, as being unworthy of all the Consolations and Comforts, of all the Assistance which we receive of him, and lastly as having no right to complain

plain of any bad uſage, becauſe there is none which we do not deſerve. But if we compare afterward thoſe Opinions which our Condition requires of us with thoſe we really have, with this violent inclination for greatneſs, with this niceneſs and ſenſibility even in ſmall and trivial things, with this Tyranical propenſity, to be obnoxious to all Men, and to relate all to our ſelves, it is impoſſible that we ſhould not be amazed at ſo ſtrange a Depoſition, and ſo oppoſite to Reaſon and Juſtice.

XVIII.

Although theſe Conſiderations may be uſeful to all the World, they are nevertheleſs proper particularly to thoſe who return to God after great Strayings. But there is another ſtudy of ones ſelf much more tedious and difficult, and which makes the exerciſe of the Juſt even during their whole life. It conſiſts in knowing thoſe Paſſions, Humours, Weakneſſes, Defects, Deceits, which Self-love makes uſe of to hide them both from our ſelves, and others, and the ſecret Injuſtices wherein this Self-love engages us. 'Tis to that each one is obliged to apply himſelf unto with Care, as to the chief Means to advance himſelf therein. For all the Faults of the Juſt, as well the ſmall ones as the important ones, do happen ordinarily, only becauſe they do not know themſelves enough, that they do not themſelves juſtice enough, and that they diſſemble, and keep cloſe a great part of their faults from themſelves.

XIX.

The perſwaſion wherein one ought to be as to the importance of this Duty, and the application to practiſe it, which ought to ſpring from it, will make one preſently diſcover a great number of Faults. For it is certain, that that which ordinarily cauſes that

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the moſt part of our Faults are unknown to us, is becauſe as ſoon as we perceive any of them, we look another way, taking them for Objects which incommode us, and ſo they make little or no impreſſion upon our Minds. Likewiſe we look upon them only ſeparately, as if we had only the fault which we are forced to ſee at that very moment. All thoſe we have obſerved in paſſing by, remain as it were annihilated in regard of us. The inclinations and cuſtoms which remain, we reckon as nothing, and ſtopping alſo at ſimple actions, and yet as ſlightly as poſſibly we can, we never have time to form an Idea of our ſelves, which is very humble.

We can make no progreſs in the ſtudy of our ſelves, but in correcting this fault, and taking a quite contrary way, which is to force the Mind to conſider its faults and imperfections, with a ſerious application to annex one to another, according as they are diſcovered to endeavour to ſearch to the bottom of it, to examin the cauſe of the Paſſions, not to think they can be eaſily deſtroyed, being ſometime without action, and to make uſe of this Image to humble our ſelves before God and Man.

In a word, we muſt act in this Study almoſt, as if we had undertaken to labour all our life time to draw our Portraictures, that is to ſay, we muſt add every day ſome ſtrokes with the Pencil, but not put out what is already drawn therein; ſo we ſhall obſerve ſometimes one Paſſion, ſometime another. To day we ſhall diſcover one deluſion of Self-love, to morrow another. And by that means we ſhall form by little and little a Portraiture ſo like, that we ſhall ſee every moment even what we are, ſo that we ſhall have reaſon to ſay continually to our ſelves, behold what I am. See here what I have loved ſo much, and could wiſh that the whole World might be the Object of its eſteem and affection.

XX.

We muſt not forget, amongſt the multitude of our faults, thoſe which being only outward and involuntary, render us not properly guilty before God. For thoſe are they, which oftentimes humble us the moſt in our own thoughts, becauſe we are ſo vain, that we ordinarily judge of our ſelves, rather according to the report of Men than Truth. Moreover, theſe Faults rendring us uncapable of certain Actions and Employments, ought to have place in the Deliberations, which we make of entring or not entring into diverſe Engagements which might be propoſed to us.

Laſtly, as they make commonly many Impreſſions upon the Minds of others, we are obliged to be very circumſpect therein, becauſe we ought partly to regulate our behaviour concerning this Impreſſion, which opens to us, or ſhuts the entrance into their Hearts, and diſpoſes them to ſtumble, or not to ſtumble at our Actions.

XXI.

Faults and Vertues ought equally to be the Object of this Examen; becauſe we muſt endeavour to know the extent, and the greatneſs of theſe Faults; and the limits and imperfections of theſe Vertues. The one and the other is neceſſary to form a true Idea of our ſelves, and we are equally deceived in the one and in the other, by the inclination Self-love gives us to hide, or leſſen what we have that's naught, and to expoſe to view, or to increaſe what we have that's good.

XXII. We

XXII.

We ought not to judge ſimply of the Greatneſs, and the Extent of theſe Faults in relation to the Conſequences, and the Effects they have had, but in relation to the Conſequences and the Effects they may have, if God hinder them not; becauſe there is no paſſion but may be the cauſe of our utter ruine. Inconſtancy, a little motion of Choler, a Word of Vanity, an inordinate Deſire, a want of Circumſpection may oftentimes be followed with conſequences which may change the whole ſtate of our Life. We ſhall know it clearly in the next World, and God will let us ſee there, that he hath made us eſcape a World of dangers, into which the weight of our Concupiſcence would have drawn us headlong, if he had not ſtopped the courſe of it. And we may likewiſe know ſome part thereof in this Life, if we reflect upon what might happen to us from all the Faults which we have committed, and on the exceſſes whereunto our Paſſions might have carried us, if they had been violently excited by the objects, and favoured by occaſions, and not hindred by the Obſtacles, which God placed there to keep them within certain boundaries, which make us acknowledge, that 'tis not through our Moderation and Wiſdom, that we have eſcap'd theſe great inconveniences, but meerly by God's mercy.

XXIII.

We muſt take away in the Examen of Virtues which we believe we have, what there is purely Natural, and wherein Grace hath no ſhare at all. For God, who ought to be the rule of all our Judgments, makes no account of what comes from Nature. The effects of Cuſtom and Habit, which is nothing but another Nature muſt be taken away. There muſt be an abſolute depriving our ſelves from the deſire we have to pleaſe Men, and from other ſecret conſiderations from In-

tereſts and Paſſions, becauſe all that is very bad. We muſt ſeparate from it what we have deſtroyed by our Ingratitude and our Sins, becauſe, that not ſubſiſting in the Eyes of God, ought not to ſubſiſt in ours. We muſt conſider how many of theſe Virtues, ſuch as they are, have little Extent, Force, and Solidity: With how ſmall Zeal we carry our ſelves therein, and after all theſe ſeparations, we muſt ask our ſelves what we have yet remaining.

XXIV.

Not only good Qualities and Virtues are nothing in the ſight of God, being deſtroyed by Crimes, but without having committed any, they become often uſeleſs, and even render us culpable by the little uſe we make of them. Becauſe the gifts of God include always ſome new Obligation. He expects more from thoſe, to whom he hath given moſt. We owe him for the Intereſt of his Favours and Graces; and if we fail to give it him, he would rather we had not received them. If he hath given us a favourable natural Condition; if he hath preſerved us from temptations which carry away moſt part of others; if we have had little to conteſt with our ſelves; if he hath given us ſome good qualities of Mind, ſome propenſity, and inclination to Virtue; Laſtly, If he hath beſtowed on us Virtue it ſelf, we ought to look upon all that as Talents from God, yet only conditional to encreaſe them, ſo that if we know we have not performed it, there is nothing ought to give us more Confuſion and Fear.

XXV.

We ought above all, to conſider the ill uſe we have made of all the Truths God hath been pleaſed to diſcover to us, be it in the elevating us thereby inwardly or outwardly, be it in prophaning them by indiſcreet entertainments, or that we make uſe of them not to

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contemn or deſpiſe our ſelves, but others. For that is the uſe, or rather the moſt common abuſe, that Men make thereof. 'Tis impoſſible that thoſe who know the Truths of the Goſpel, ſhould not ſee at the ſame time, how little they are obſerved by a great many, who at other times make profeſſion of Piety. We may ſee, that they want light in many Points, and that they commit divers conſiderable faults. And malice placing it ſelf on that ſide, takes delight in buſying it ſelf about theſe Defects. It exaggerates them, it ſtuffs it ſelf with them, and thereby diſſwades the Mind from whatever might be able to edifie it in thoſe, in whom we obſerve them. Every thing wounds and ſhocks theſe ſo clear-ſighted, but little charitable Men; If a Monaſtery do not follow the Rules preſcribed by the Canons of the Church, they do no more good in it, they buſie themſelves only in that, and make no accompt of what it hath otherwiſe of God. They have reaſon in what they condemn, but they have not to condemn it with ſo little Meekneſs, Humility and Charity: ſo that they blame things oftentimes after a manner more blameable than the Evil it ſelf, by which they are hurt.

XXVI.

We may ſay that 'tis nothing but the want of Will, which is able to prevent that we arrive not at this degree of Self Knowledge, being we imagine that Men do not apply themſelves to this Examen, except in viſible Faults. What remains is more difficult, becauſe it is active in giving means to diſcover thoſe which we cannot find in our ſelves, either for want of Judgment, or elſe through the Devices of Self-Love. We hardly ſee any one, in whom we do not think to find ſome Faults which are unknown to him; and as we ought to judge thereby, that this Illuſion is very common, the leaſt we can conclude of it is, that it is much to be feared, we are not more exempt from it than others.

We have likewiſe no reaſon to aſſure our ſelves, that theſe ſecret and hidden Faults are not very conſiderable, and never capable to hinder Salvation. This is by no means true; the blindneſs wherein we are, is able to hide very important ones from us. How many for example, do we ſee, who not knowing their want of Underſtanding, do undertake Employments, and therein commit very great Faults. Men chuſe their Occupations and Employments ill, they ſlight thoſe which are proper for them, and apply themſelves to others in which they cannot proſper. Men ingage themſelves in conteſts which have evil conſequences, they think they are in the right when they are in the wrong, and upon this ſcore they deal hardly with others; they excite murmurings againſt themſelves; they deſtroy the whole Edification, they were able to give by their other actions. There are ſome, who for want of knowing what they have that's troubleſome in their Humours and Conducts, raiſe a Coldneſs, and a Diſguſt in the Heart of others, who diſunite by this means whole Societies, who divert Perſons from their way, and ſtifle in them the Seeds which God has ſown therein. There are ſome who ſerve as obſtacles, (not dreaming of it) to many uſeful and neceſſary things, becauſe they do not know how to behave themſelves in treating with them.

There are ſome, who by ſmall tyes, or wilful preventions which they know not of, are hindred from ſatisfying theſe important Duties, the omitting of which becomes a Scandal to thoſe who ſee them act; and cauſeth great inconveniences. Laſtly, It ſeldom happens, that theſe Viſible Errors have not their beginning from thoſe Faults which Men will not ſee.

XXVII.

This ought to ſuffice to make us joyn to the Examen, which we ought to make of our ſelves, what ſtrength we can draw from others to know our ſelves better.

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There are ſeveral ways that it may be procured, but I ſhall only take notice of the two Principal ones which comprehend many others. The one is in ſome ſort to go before Truth it ſelf, ſeeking it in the Example and the Inſtructions of other People; the other to ſuffer that it approach us, in giving it a free acceſs, and taking away all obſtacles which may hinder this approach.

XXVIII.

We ſeek Truth in others Mens examples, by the Reflexions we make on their Actions, which extend to their Virtues, and to their Faults: Their Virtues inſtruct us in thoſe we want, they convince us of our Weakneſs and of our Baſeneſs, and they humble us by this compariſon. It is enough alſo, oftentimes that there be ſome difference of light and conduct betwixt others and us, to give us thereby means to undeceive our ſelves. Becauſe althô Self-Love perſuades us at firſt, that we have reaſon on our ſide: yet if we obſerve that other Mens conduct hath ordinarily good ſucceſs, and that ours on the contrary hath always bad, we ſhould be wilful to believe that we are not in the wrong.

XXIX.

'Tis almoſt the only means to acknowledge in ones ſelf what Men call falſe Judgment, which is a Defect that makes Men undertake croſs buſineſſes, engages them in falſe Parties, in various Opinions, and in evil Arguments. For althô this ſame lack of Judgment, which produceth theſe falſe Opinions, may be a hinderance to the direct acknowledging them; yet if it happen, that a Man had the fortune to obſerve, that generally he was ſingle in his Sentiment, and that his Thought were almoſt alway contrary to every Bodies elſe, he muſt be extreamly opiniated, to conclude from

thence that he is in the right. And thus the leaſt he can do is to be miſtruſtful of his Judgment, and of the quality of his Underſtanding, and to conſult ſincerely upon the Points, in which he ſhall have ſome Particular advices, the moſt able, and moſt diſintereſted Perſons he knows, by endeavouring in good earneſt to embrace their Reaſons.

XXX.

It is by ſo much more important to endeavour to be edified by other Mens Virtues, and good Qualities, by how much more we ought to acknowledge in us an inclination which ſeparates us from them. Our wickedneſs hides part of them from us, and makes us apply our ſelves to thoſe which it cannot hide from us; we abſolutely either forget them, or we ſcarcely take notice of thoſe who have them, in theſe Circumſtances; on the contrary, their Faults make very deep Impreſſions in our Minds. We conſerve of them very lively Images, which preſent themſelves on their own accord without the trouble of ſeeking them, and we renew continually theſe Images and Impreſſions by new Reflections, to hinder them from loſing any thing of their Force and Strength. However, we ought to do the contrary, ſeeing that whereas there are very few, who are charged to remedy other Mens Faults, there is none on the contrary, God does not oblige to profit by their Virtues. For he propoſes them to all thoſe who ſee them as a Living and animated Inſtruction, for which he will demand an account one day, as of all the other Favours he hath done them.

XXXI.

But it is not forbid to obſerve in others certain Viſible Faults, and it is likewiſe impoſſible not to ſee what ſtrikes upon our Senſes, we muſt try to make uſe of them, thereby to know our ſelves better, and to the

the end we may draw this advantage from thence, we muſt firſt perceive ſome of thoſe Faults, we muſt ask our ſelves; *Num quid ego unquam Imprudens facio ſimile huic?* Did not I fall my ſelf into theſe Faults, which I obſerve in this Man? The occaſion of making theſe kind of reflections, are but too common; becauſe Self-Love, which has a thouſand tricks to conceal from us our proper Faults, hath no leſs to diſcover thoſe of others. And whereas its delicateneſs does ſcarcely permit us to look ſtedfaſtly upon our ow[illegible] ns on the contrary clear-ſighted in reſpect of thoſe of others. We ſee them ſuch as they are; we conſider them as much as we will; we hardly trouble our ſelves to leſſen them by favourable excuſes; this effect comes doubtleſs from ſome bad cauſes. But keeping them within their boundaries ſome profit may be drawn from thence, and uſe made thereof to deceive in ſome ſort Self-Love. For by conſidering thus the Faults of others, without this multiplicity of Conſiderations, and Artificial Excuſes, which deceive us in ours, we may eaſily diſcover what is the falſe Light which dazles them; how they have engaged themſelves in this Illuſion, what they ought to do to be delivered from it. And afterwards, in turning all theſe Conſiderations towards our ſelves, we may eaſily apply them to our ſelves, if we have never ſo little ſincerity, and deſire to know our ſelves.

XXXII.

Unleſs we make uſe of this cunning to profit by the Fault of another, which we cannot hinder our ſelves from ſeeing, they only blind us more, inſtead of helping us to know our ſelves. For either we take occaſion to ſlight thoſe who fall therein by raiſing our ſelves above them, as if we were exempt, or if we acknowledge our ſelves guilty as well as they, we comfort our ſelves, that we alone are not ſubject to theſe Weakneſſes. We are glad that they have not this advantage over us.

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We diminiſh the Idea we have of our own Faults, as looking upon them common to many, and as being rather the Conſequences and Infirmities of Nature than of our Diſorder. And thus we free our ſelves in ſome ſort ſecretly from the Reproaches of our Conſciences, by hiding our ſelves in the throng of the Culpable.

XXXIII.

[redacted] the Inſtructions which may be drawn out of other Mens Faults which we perceive by our ſelves, very important ones may likewiſe be drawn from the Judgments which we hear made of them, by thoſe who entertain themſelves with them. For we may learn that 'tis in vain to diſſemble our own, and be angry at thoſe who ſpeak of them; we thereby only apply People more to do it. Becauſe whereas they are ordinarily very indulging to the Imperfections of thoſe who ſeriouſly acknowledge them, they do not ſuffer on the contrary patiently thoſe which we would hide or canonize, and of which they do not permit us to ſpeak with freedom. Although they be ſomething reſerved in ſpeaking with thoſe, of whom they have ſome reaſon to be diſtruſtful, they may find always ſome one to whom they may ſpeak freely; ſo by this means things are diſperſed in ſecret from one to another, almoſt as if they did ſpeak them publickly. So that we muſt ſhew, that the only way to hinder Men from ſpeaking of our Faults is to Correct them our ſelves, or to Teſtifie that we deſire it ſeriouſly, and that we are well pleaſed to be put in mind of them.

XXXIV.

We may learn by theſe Judgments that hardly any one knows what is thought of him, nor what Impreſſion his Actions make upon the Minds of others; from whence it happens, that in forming to our ſelves falſe Opinions of their Diſpoſition, we take in concluſion falſe

falſe Meaſures. We do not the Good we ought, nor prevent the Evil which we might; we diſturb others a thouſand ſeveral ways, without knowing it, and we break thus by little and little, all the tyes which knit the Union we have with them.

We perceive it well at the end of ſome of theſe bad Effects, but that only increaſeth the Illuſion we are in. For the lack of knowing the Cauſes which are given them, we ſubſtitute falſe ones. We caſt all the Blame on others, we attribute to them the Motives, Intentions, and Deſigns on which they never thought, and upon that we form of them very diſadvantageous *Ideas*, which appearing without by ſome Exterior marks do yet encreaſe the remoteneſs they have from us.

XXXV.

'Tis true, we muſt not abſolutely rule our Conduct by the Opinions and Impreſſions of others. But theſe Opinions and Impreſſions being uniform, they give us often means to acknowledge, That this Conduct is not regulated according to God's Laws; others being ordinarily more ſubtil than we, to diſcover what happens in us of Paſſion and Self-Love. Even oftentimes when theſe Impreſſions are unjuſt, they do not forbear to have ſome Cauſe in us, the which we may remedy. In fine, how unreaſonable they are, as they may be either ſharpen'd or ſweeten'd by our Conduct, they may ſerve for Obſtacles to certain Enterprizes, and facilitate others, and we may ſometimes take other courſes to avoid them. It's always good to know them, provided we are able to undergo them.

XXXVI.

We might obtain this advantage, and we might ſhun one part of the Incoveniences, if we did practice ſincerely what is obſerved in St. *Thomas* of *Canterbury*'s Life, which was, that one of his Friends ſhould adver-

tiſe

tiſe him of all that he found fit to tell him again in his Carriage. And it is what they had in Proſpect, who have ordered that in certain Religious Houſes, That there ſhould be one Perſon charged to receive the Complaints that each ſhould make of the Superiors Behaviour, to give him an account thereof, without naming the Authors. But as all the World cannot enjoy this Good, we ought to endeavour to ſupply it by procuring a Faithful and Underſtanding Friend, to whom an entire liberty ſhould be given, to advertiſe us of what ſhould be ſaid of us in the World; and after what manner our Actions might be taken therein.

XXXVII.

It ſeems at firſt, that the moſt part of the World do follow theſe advices, and that at leaſt it is practiſed by all Perſons who profeſs Piety. For there are none who have not a Confeſſor, and this Confeſſor ought to be that Faithful Friend who ſhould advertiſe us of our Faults, of the Scandal which we cauſe, ſeeing that we give him that right in addreſſing our ſelves to him. He may know them ſo much better, as he joyns to the Knowledge we give him of our ſelves, that which he ſometimes may get elſewhere, and that thus he ſees the limits of our light; that is to ſay, what we know of our ſelves, and what we know not. And as the practice of this Office of Charity makes one of the Chief Parts of his Miniſtry, There is hardly any one who does not flatter himſelf, That 'tis that he ſeeks in ſubmitting himſelf to the Conduct of a Director, and who does not believe that he gives him in this point all the Liberty which he can deſire.

XXXVIII. Who-

XXXVIII.

Whoſoever will unfold theſe ſecret windings of his own Heart, will find that although he think not to addreſs himſelf to a Confeſſor, except to draw from thence ſome help the better to know himſelf, he hath at the bottom of his Heart a quite contrary end, and a ſecret deſign to make uſe thereof to juſtifie himſelf in his Faults, which is properly not knowing himſelf. This it is we do not take heed of to confeſs in our ſelves, ſeeing that on the contrary we know it not, and that we have alſo on the outward appearance of the Mind a quite different thought. But Self-love which reſides in the bottom of the Soul knows how to proſper there without our making any expreſs reflections. See here the Artifice Self-love makes uſe of. We have two ſorts of Faults, the firſt which are the Object of our Affection, and which we will not acknowledge for Faults, for fear of being obliged to diſanul them; the others that we really condemn are thoſe which we have no inclination to, and from which we would very willingly be delivered. Self-love makes us therefore firſt chooſe a Ghoſtly Father, who ought to judge of us almoſt as we would deſire; afterwards it makes as it were a kind of Covenant and Bargain with him. Self-love tells him the Faults it love not: it is content that he find fault with them, as it would it ſelf. But the Object of its principal Paſſions it ſcarcely puts under the Cenſure of the Confeſſor, and only chooſes him, thinking that he will not concern himſelf with them.

Therefore firſt we juſtifie our Paſſions to our ſelves, and at laſt we ſeek a Ghoſtly Father to juſtifie them. In a word, we would have one who might not out-go us in direction, and who would conform in every thing, that is, we would he ſhould approve and condemn what we our ſelves approve and condemn.

XXXIX. 'Tis

XXXIX.

'Tis that which is the cauſe that there being even amongſt thoſe who profeſs Piety ſo many ſtrange and irregular Conducts, there is hardly any one nevertheleſs who wants a Director, if he will have one; and this Director is of no uſe to thoſe that would chooſe him in this manner, but to ſtifle their Remorſes, and to make them live more quietly in the condition, out of which they have no deſire to depart.

Thus we may define a Director in reſpect of the moſt part of the World, a charitable Cenſurer of ſmall Faults, and light Defects, and an Approver of Paſſions, which we will not remove. We would not have a Director who would not find fault at all, and we would not have one neither who touches upon our beloved Paſſions. Theſe two Conditions are both equally eſſential; becauſe, as it would be troubleſome, if he did pretend to contradict us in what we reſolve abſolutely to do, he would ſerve our Self-love but ill, if he did not contradict us in ſome thing, our intention being to make uſe of his zeal againſt certain Faults, to authoriſe us in thoſe we would not acknowledge for ſuch.

XL.

Therefore 'tis not ſufficient to have a Director, not even to have one Learned. We muſt moreover abandon our ſelves to him without diſſimulation and artifice, and reſolve to conform our ſelves to the judgment he makes of us, and not to incline him to follow ours. Laſtly, we muſt be ready to learn from him to know our ſelves better, and be glad of his aid and aſſiſtance therein, without preſcribing him limits. 'Tis the diſpoſition all the World ought to be in; but 'tis not neceſſary that it be perfect, or rather it is impoſſible that it ſhould be ſo. Becauſe there is no Man upon Earth, who

who hath humility enough, and force to ſupport, without being diſcouraged and afraid of the ſight of the leaſt ſin in its natural greatneſs; and it is true to ſay of all our known ſins in their greateſt extent, what the Scripture ſaid of God, *Non videbit me homo, & vivet.* Thus to take a proportionable Conduct, both of the neceſſity we all have of Truth, and to the weakneſs which renders us incapable of undergoing it in all its force, we muſt wiſh ardently to know it. We muſt embrace with docility what is diſcovered of it to us; we muſt believe that we are mightily ſpared, and labour nevertheleſs to become more ſtrong, to the end we may be leſs obliged to ſpare our ſelves.

XLI.

We would doubtleſs advance hugely in this Self-knowledge, if we really had this diſpoſition in the Heart, by treating with the Confeſſor we have choſen. But we muſt however not grant only to this Confeſſor the right of diſcovering to us our Faults, and the evil conſequences of our Actions. On the contrary, it would be juſt to ſtretch this right as far as we can poſſible; and to give it alſo in ſome ſort to all the World, ſeeing there is not any to whom we are not anſwerable, and whom we are not able to hurt and ſcandalize. How circumſpect ſoever a Confeſſor may be, he ſees not always our actions; he hears not all we ſay, he knows not always the impreſſions our Words and our Actions make upon others; and it is ſcarcely, except from thoſe who perceive them that they can be learnt. One ſhould therefore learn the cuſtom of being leſs delicate in this Point, and give all the World an honeſt liberty. Poſſibly we ſhould receive oftentimes advertiſements leſs cenſurable. But if we will receive only thoſe which ſhall appear altogether reaſonable, we ſhall receive none at all. For Men will never charge themſelves with ſo ſevere an exactneſs, and they will much ſooner looſe the Party by ſaying nothing

nothing at all to us, than expoſe themſelves to hurt us, if what they ſhould ſay did not appear to us abſolutely juſt.

We muſt on the other ſide ſuppoſe, that every one being prepoſſeſſed on the one part, that he loves not to be admoniſhed of his Faults, and on the other unwilling to ſhew any averſion upon him, is diſpoſed by this means to free himſelf from rendring us this charitable office, and to tell us nothing what he thinks of us, nor what he knows others think of us. Thus except we remove this Obſtacle, and go as it were before Truth, in exciting others to tell it us, in teſtifying to them in an unſuſpected manner, that we think our ſelves in ſome ſort obliged that they ſhould do it, and thus diſperſing the fear they have of rendring themſelves odious, they will always obſerve with us this deceitful reſervedneſs, which entertains and keeps us in ignorance of many things which would be very neceſſary to be known.

XLII.

We muſt not imagin, that it is ſufficient to receive without being moved, the advices which are given us, and to thank thoſe who run the hazard of giving us them. For it is well enough known to all the World, that as it is a ſhame to ſhew that one is offended at them, ſo we endeavour to do our ſelves honour in being civil upon theſe occaſions. But we muſt perſuade People that theſe civilities are ſincere; and it is that which cannot be without ſhunning many things, which the World take for marks of a ſecret diſcontent and ſpite, which we are afraid to diſcover.

XLIII.

We muſt not pretend for example, that they ever take the liberty to adviſe us of any thing, if they ſee that we have no union and tye, but with thoſe who enter

enter abſolutely into all our Sentiments; and that we teſtifie to all others nothing but drineſs and coldneſs.

If they ſee, that after this confidence which they ſhall have ſhewn us, we enter into a reſervedneſs of Mind, that we find our ſelves entangled every time we are with them, and that we act no more after a free and natural manner. If they ſee that to have more right to reject the Advice which is given us, we give an evil cenſure of it; that we ſeek every where for People, who condemn them by propoſing them after an odious faſhion; if we ſeek in the Perſons of thoſe, who give them wherewith to decry their Judgments; if in occaſions which preſent themſelves, we ſpeak of them with more ſharpneſs than ordinarily. Laſtly, if they be aware, that that hath made a wound in our Heart, let us be mindful of it and let us mingle on purpoſe in our Diſcourſes certain affected Apologies relating to the things we have been advertiſed of. If we do not avoid, ſay I, all thoſe things which ſhew us to be inwardly grieved, we muſt not hope that they will ſtop at words of Civility, which are deſtroyed by ſo many marks of ſecret diſcontent, and thoſe real.

XLIV.

'Tis the Sentiment of a Wiſe Pagan, that he who is advertiſed of any Fault, ought not to do the ſame preſently, in reſpect of him from whom he doth receive this advertiſement, and that he ought to expect another time to render him this office. But this advice muſt be ſtretched much farther; for we muſt not only not reprehend upon the place thoſe who reprehend us, but we muſt alſo avoid reprehending them when there is reaſon to ſuſpect, that any ſecret ſpite ſhould have opened our Eyes to ſee their Faults, and made us attentive to obſerve them. We ought to ſuppoſe they are in pain to know the effect of the Advices they have given, and that they will perceive the leaſt ſign which

we ſhall give of diſapproving: That they will refer to this cauſe all they ſhall remark in us of coldneſs, and averſion to them, which might render theſe advices unprofitable to them, and give them leave to make a raſh judgment of us. And this is it which obliges us to ſtand upon our guards on that ſide, and to teſtifie to them even more freedom and confidence, than we would have done at another time.

XLV.

It is ſo much more important to preſerve this conduct towards thoſe, who run the hazard of giving us this Advice; becauſe in Acting otherwiſe we do not ſhut the Mouth only of one or two Perſons, but almoſt generally to all the World. Becauſe there needs but two or three rencounters of this nature, to get ones ſelf the reputation of being very nice, and to paſs in the Minds of thoſe who know us for People, who love not that we ſhould ſpeak freely to them. Now after this impreſſion is form'd, 'tis a very ſtrong barr againſt Truth. Each Man ſeeks pretences to free himſelf from the ſpeaking to thoſe Curious Men. We fear always to diſturb and vex them. Thus in doubt we ordinarily take the way of being ſilent, and ſay nothing to them that may be diſagreeable.

XLVI.

The Great ones and Princes complain, and Reaſon ſhews that they are miſerable in this, that their Greatneſs is the cauſe that Truth dare not approach them, and that they paſs thus all their Life in Illuſion. But certainly we have not leſs cauſe to complain in this point of the moſt part of thoſe, who are in any eſteem in the World. For they are not Princes by Birth, they are Princes by Humour, in diſperſing amongſt all thoſe who come near them, certain terrors which hinder their moſt intimate Friends from ſpeaking freely to them.

From

From whence it happens, that oftentimes they are not informed what is made uſe of for entertainment to all the World; for they think to be approved in what is almoſt univerſally condemned, and laſtly take almoſt in all things falſe meaſures.

XLVII.

It is much more important to avoid the appearing of this Humour, becauſe when this ſelf Impreſſion is given, even our Friends believe they are obliged by Charity to diſſemble their Opinions, and to leave us to our own wills. St. *Auſtin* complains as of one of the chiefeſt difficulties which is met with in the Commerce of this Life, that when Men approve not ſomething in the Words or Writings of ſome one, and that they diſcover to them this Opinion in the belief that Chriſtian liberty doth oblige us to make uſe of it thus, it happens often, that theſe Advices paſs for effects of jealouſie, rather than of amity. He repreſents theſe evil ſuſpicions as a conſiderable Fault, and at the ſame time very frequent, and he ſays, that oftentimes they cauſe Diviſions and Enmities amongſt Perſons very well united. Nevertheleſs, he cannot tell himſelf any other remedy for this evil, but by ſuppreſſing theſe Sentiments, when we have buſineſs with Friends of this Humour. *If I can*, ſaid he to St. Jerome, *expoſe freely to you what appears defective in your Writings, and that you cannot do the ſame in reſpect of mine, without rendring our ſelves ſuſpected of diſtruſt for one another, and of want of Friendſhip, let us rather leave all that, and not put our Lives and Salvations in danger. Let ſomething of Science rather be wanting, which doth ſwell, provided that we hurt not Charity which doth edifie.* And in another of his Letters, *Methinks*, ſaith he, *we ought to treat together not only with Charity, but alſo with Liberty and Friendſhip, and that thus we ought not to diſſemble, what may be diſpleaſing in our Writings, provided that we do it with a Spirit which God approves* *Aug. Epiſt. 250.*

in Brotherly Charity. But if you think that we cannot uſe this conduct one towards the other, without the danger of hurting Charity, we ſhall do better to abſtain from it. For although this ſort of Charity, which I deſired we might practice together, be very excellent; nevertheleſs, it is better to entertain our ſelves in this other to which you have reduced me, than to have none at all. Illa enim Charitas quam tecum habere vellem major eſt profectò, ſed melior hæc minor quam nulla eſt. If a Saint found himſelf obliged to do thus towards another Saint, we ſee eaſily that we may well be reduced to do it towards others, and thus even Charity demands ſometimes, that we live in this Reſerve with our Friends, when they give no more overture to diſcover to them their Sentiments.

XLVIII.

Beſides the reputation of Delicateneſs, there is yet another which ſtrangely hinders even our Friends from ſpeaking freely with us, 'tis that of being tyed to our own Senſe, and ſtrongly opiniated of our thoughts. Becauſe having given this Idea of our ſelves, hardly any body ventures to gainſay us, eſpecially if we have ſome conſideration which perſwades Men to deal warily with us. Thus every one is reſerved, and leaves us to believe what we have a mind, mocking often at us inwardly. But they will ſay; Is it only that we may not paſs for Opiniators in the minds of thoſe, who would be believed in all they propoſe; that we ſhall be forced to grant, that we approve Opinions which in effect we do not, and yield to all the Advices the firſt Comer ſhall think good to give us? 'Tis by this means that People juſtifie in themſelves and flatter themſelves, that their ſtubborneſs, and their inflexibility in their Sentiments, proceed only from the love they have for Truth. But it is eaſie to convince them, that one may avoid the reputation of being tied to ones own ſenſe, without approving all the thoughts of others, which would be a very great fault. To do this, 'tis but to diſtinguiſh reaſonable Certainty, which is a Vertue, from Self-opinion, which is a Vice.

XLIX.

We cannot juſtly force whomſoever he be, to yield to our Judgments, not being convinced, nor yet accuſe him of being obſtinate: Becauſe if it is through knowledge that he is not perſwaded of it, he is praiſeworthy for not yielding to what is falſe; If it is lack of underſtanding, and of light, he may be accuſed of theſe faults, but not of that of being obſtinate. Alſo the World does not commit this injuſtice, when we give it elſewhere what it hath a right to exact from us. See here in what it conſiſts. Though Men in this Life be not abſolutely incapable of knowing any truth certainly, yet there are ſo many things which they ſee but obſcurely, and they are ſo often deceived in taking that for a certainty, which indeed is not ſo, in conſidering Objects confuſedly, and in not ſeeing therein all that is neceſſary to judge by, that the leaſt they ought to do, is to have a general diſtruſt of their Sentiments and Thoughts, when they are not expreſly confirmed by Faith, and the Authority of the Church. This diſtruſt cauſes not them to be indetermined, and that they do not take ſome part, but it hinders them from propoſing their Thoughts with a determinative Air, and to be troubled when they are contradicted. This diſtruſt makes them give ear, and examin ſeriouſly the Reaſons alledged againſt their Opinions. Laſtly, it makes them ſlight the Opinions they approve not of, with ſo much Modeſty, that we remain perſwaded that they ſhould have diſpoſed to embrace them, if they had had light enough to penetrate into the Reaſons. This is the diſpoſition the World doth force from us, and with Reaſon, becauſe we ought to have it in effect. And the contrary to this diſpoſition, that is to ſay, that aſſurance which excludes even general diſtruſt, that determinative Air, that manner of rejecting other Mens Opinions without taking almoſt the pains to examin them, as if they were incapable of finding out the

Truth, or of being deceived, is that properly, which Men call being Opiniator.

'Tis that which repulſes the World, and hinders it from ſpeaking freely to us, becauſe 'tis always imagin'd that it would be in vain, for when we have eſpouſed a Cauſe, we never forſake it; but after having conteſted ſoundly, we always think that we have Reaſon, and that others have not. Thus every one had rather leave all in that Condition, and abandon us to our own light without propoſing theirs to us.

L.

We produce almoſt the ſame bad Effects, if without conteſting and ſhewing wilfulneſs, we remain nevertheleſs in a certain coldneſs, without appearing either to approve or diſapprove the liberty which our Friends take in telling us their Opinions. For as they are naturally inclin'd to believe, that this liberty is not pleaſing to us, and that they are in diſtruſt upon this Point; Whoſoever deſtroys not this Impreſſion by his Air, and by his way of anſwering, gives leave to believe, that he would willingly that it may ſubſiſt or remain, and his ſilence being taken with probability for a token of diſcontent, the World thinks it ſelf freed from making for the future the like attempts.

LI.

If we be careful to avoid theſe, and ſuch like Faults, we may engage our true Friends to tell us ſometimes what they think of our Actions, and to let us know after what manner the World takes them. But to judge well of what they tell us we muſt obſerve this Rule, That as Natural Complacency, fear of Troubling, and Civility it ſelf, obliges thoſe who ſpeak to us of our Faults to moderate themſelves much in their Expreſſions; If we will know their Judgment exactly, we muſt add of our ſelves what is wanting in their Words,

Words, and not imagin that theſe thoughts come into their Mind with all theſe reſtrictions, and theſe mollifications which they uſe in propoſing them to us. Let us endeavour therefore, that they tell us only ſome ſmall part of what is judged of us, and that we muſt multiply in ſome ſort all that is ſaid of us to find out the Truth. If they tell us, that they have ſome little to contradict in ſome thing we have done, that ſignifies that there is therein much to be gainſaid. If they ſay they make ſome difficulty in ſome Argument, that means that they believe it falſe and ridiculous. If they tell us, that they cannot without difficulty enter into any of our thoughts, that is, they diſapprove and condemn them. If they give us notice that there are ſome People who harm themſelves by certain Actions, that is to ſay, there are a great number who are ſcandalized at them. Laſtly, it muſt be ſuppoſed that the language of Advertiſements is a particular Language; that we do expreſs our ſelves therein but by halves; that they are nothing but perpetual ſilences, and that unleſs we ſupply and underſtand it at half Sentences, we are deceived by thoſe even who ſtrive to undeceive us.

LII.

If Man had as much ſubtilty and craft for what relates to his Happineſs, as generally he hath for his Intereſts, he would not only diſcover the Truth from under ſome little Clouds, the goodneſs and prudence whereof might ſerve to ſweeten and temper it, but he would even diſtinguiſh it in the moſt profound obſcurity of Fiction and Diſſimulation. We alter it by the fiction of Flatteries; we diſſemble it by Silence; but very often it relies only on us to diſtinguiſh it in the one and the other. Becauſe there is always ſomething of Truth in flattery it ſelf, and Silence hath alſo its Language; which hath cauſed St. *Jerom* to call the ſilence of St. *Aſelle, Silentium loquens.* *Hier.* Ep. 3.

LIII.

To comprehend what there may be of Truth in flattery, we need only to diſtinguiſh the preciſe Senſe of Expreſſions from the thoughts which they give us leave to read in the Mind of thoſe who make uſe of them. There is no Truth at all in the preciſe Senſe of the Expreſſions of Flatterers, ſeeing that we take here the term of Flattery for a falſe Praiſe. But they give leave to know many of their thoughts, and to inſtruct us by theſe thoughts of many Truths which concern us.

The firſt is, when they give theſe Praiſes, they believe the quite contrary what they ſay, and contemn as much in their Hearts thoſe to whom they give them as they do teſtifie outwardly eſteem for them.

The ſecond is drawn from the nature of ſome Praiſes which they chooſe. For they take ordinarily the ſubſtance of things truly Praiſe-worthy, which they falſly attribute to thoſe they deſire to flatter. Thus thoſe to whom we give Praiſes ought not to conclude from thence neither, That they have theſe qualities effectively which are attributed to them, nor that there are People who believe it, but only theſe qualities are Praiſable in themſelves, and that it were to be wiſhed that they had them, that is to ſay, that they might learn by that not what they are, but what they ought to be. 'Tis a reflexion St. *Auguſtine* made upon the Praiſe *Cicero* gave to *Cæſar*, *To forget nothing but Injuries*, *Nihil obliviſci niſi Injurias*. *Dicebat hoc*, ſaid he, *tam magnus Laudator, aut tam magnus Adulator, ſed ſi Laudator talem Cæſarem noverat, ſi autem Adulator, talem eſſe debere oſtendebat Principem Civitatis, qualem illum fallaciter prædicabat. What* Cicero *ſaid to* Cæſar, ſaid this Father, *was either a great Praiſe, or a great Flattery: If it was a Praiſe he ought to believe that* Cæſar *was really ſuch an one: If it was a flattery he ſhewed always thereby, that he who Commands an Eſtate ought to have theſe qualities which he attributed falſly to* Cæſar.

The

The third thing that Flattery teacheth us is of the the ſame kind as the firſt. 'Tis, that the Flatterer believes not only what he ſays, but he imagines moreover, that he whom he flatters is Fool enough to let himſelf be deceived by his Flatteries, and to take them for ſincere Praiſes. And as we cannot approve falſe Praiſes but by flattering our ſelves, every Flatterer condemns, in himſelf, of Illuſion and Vanity, that Man to whom he addreſſes his Flatteries. This is the Judgment of it. Laſtly, as it is by Intereſt and not by Inclination that we are inclined to Flattery, and that we make uſe thereof only as a Means to obtain of the great ones what we pretend; Flatterers muſt Judge, That thoſe to whom they give theſe falſe Praiſes, are mightily in love with themſelves to be gained by ſuch groſs deceits. So that if all that is in the Mind of a Flatterer were laid open and explicated, it might be reduced to this ſtrange Complement. Sir, *I believe nothing of theſe Praiſes I give you, I have for you all the juſt diſdain you deſerve; but knowing that you are vain enough to believe that Men have in their Heart the Sentiments of Eſteem which I ſhew you, and that the exceſs of love you have for your ſelf will be able to diſpoſe you to do me the favours I deſire, I thought that to obtain them, I ought to attempt a way which ought to bring the contrary.* Behold what the Great may ſee in the Minds of moſt People who Praiſe them, if they can add to the Expreſſion of theſe Flatterers, what they are able to gather from their thoughts. But as that would incommode them, they had rather penetrate leſs, and ſtick at the appearances of Words. And 'tis by the Knowledge Men have of this Diſpoſition that they run the hazard to uſe this wicked means.

LIV.

The Language of Silence, is what ſilence it ſelf makes known in the Minds of thoſe who are ſilent for certain Conſiderations. For Example, when we avoid

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ſpeaking of a certain Fault before Great Men, that ſignifies we believe them ſubject to it, and that we are afraid, leſt they ſhould take to themſelves what might be ſaid of it. In like manner, when in their preſence we omit to praiſe certain Perſons, it is interpreted, that we imagine they love them not, and that they have a prejudice againſt them. Thus they need but to obſerve the Diſcourſes that are forborn before them, to know what Prejudices, and what Faults are laid to their charge. And as nothing is ſpoken of ſo much in Men's abſence, as things which we dare not ſpeak in their preſence, they may alſo judge by theſe Diſcourſes which we never make before them, what are thoſe which are often diſcourſed of when we are far removed from them.

LV.

The practice of theſe means is not only uſeful to make us know many Defects which we are ignorant of, but it is very proper to obtain of God the aſſiſtance of his Lights in this ſtudy of our ſelves, to which we apply our ſelves. Nevertheleſs what progreſs we may make therein, we muſt not pretend ever to arrive at that pitch of knowing our ſelves perfectly. Man hath always in his heart ſo long as he is in this Life, ſome abuſes impenetrable to all theſe diligent ſearches. And it is likewiſe one part of the Knowledge we may have of our ſelves, to comprehend that we do not know our ſelves with aſſurance, in what even appears moſt Eſſential, and moſt Important. For we never know certainly what is called the bottom of the Heart, or that firſt propenſity of the Soul, which makes her either belong to God or the Creature. I would ſay, that we know not certainly that we belong to God, although we may know aſſuredly that we are not ſo.

We know not with an entire aſſurance, the Habitation of God in the Soul, as in his Temple, becauſe 'tis an attendant of the firſt Propenſity of the Heart.

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We know not abſolutely in the Particular actions, whether the Love of God is the Principle of them, or whether Nature and Cuſtom did not borrow the Form of the Love of God.

None knows abſolutely if his Sins be forgiven, he knows not the preciſe degree of his weakneſs or force, he knows not what God imputes, or not imputes to us of the continual productions of our Concupiſcences.

Laſtly, We know not evidently, either the Nearneſs or the Remoteneſs of God. For often we think we have Grace, when the Mind is taken up only with Thoughts, and quite natural Motions, and often even we take for Motives of Nature true Operations of Grace.

We ought therefore to ſuppoſe, that with all our Study, and all our diligent Scrutinies, we ſhall always remain unknown to our ſelves in this Life. But as this neceſſary Ignorance is in the Order of God, we bear it humbly, and believe likewiſe that it is neceſſary for us to continue therein. There is nothing but voluntary Ignorance that we ought to ſhun, becauſe it is contrary to this Order.

LVI.

In a Word, we ought not to deſire to know our ſelves more than God pleaſeth. And God will not that we know our ſelves more than is neceſſary to make us humble, and to govern our ſelves. Thus every Application to dive to the bottom of the Heart, which is not incloſed within its limits, is not agreeable to God, nor uſeful to us.

We muſt not therefore buſie our ſelves in ſuch a manner about our Faults, leſt that under pretence of avoiding Preſumption, we fall into Deſpair and Trouble. Therefore whatever may be ſaid of this Portraiture, which we muſt attempt to make of our ſelves, if it happen nevertheleſs that we were ſo frighted at theſe Objects, that the Soul might thereby be overwhelm'd,

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it would be better a great deal to turn it another way, and to buſie it only about God's Mercies.

LVII.

Care yet ought to be had in the whole Examination of our Actions and interior Motions, to do our ſelves the ſame Juſtice that we think we are obliged to do to others; that is to ſay, not to condemn our ſelves without Evidence.

It is true, that we are ignorant whether our better Actions are good, and agreeable to God; but yet we know much leſs whether they are diſagreeable.

There are intermixt therewith many humane and corrupted Conſiderations, but we cannot tell whether they be voluntary, and what part thereof we have, whether they are not pure Motives of Concupiſcence, which God doth not impute to us, or temptations of the Enemy, which render us yet leſs guilty.

We acknowledge in us a great ſtock of Corruption, but this ſtock whatever it be, doth not render us guilty when there is another ſtock of the Love of God and Juſtice, which poſſeſſeth our Hearts.

We have committed, and we commit hourly an Infinity of Faults, but God pardons alſo hourly this Infinity of Faults, when we return to him with a True and Sincere Humility. And thus we cannot tell whether theſe Faults do ſubſiſt before his Eyes.

What therefore muſt be done in this Ignorance? We muſt humble our ſelves under the Hand of God, but not condemn our ſelves; becauſe that would be to attribute to our ſelves a Knowledge which we have not.

LVIII.

Laſtly, The principal Precaution that ought to be had in the ſtudy of ones Self, is, not to apply ones ſelf ſo abſolutely to it, but joyn it always with the infi-

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nite Mercies of God, which ſurpaſs ſo much all our Miſeries, that they are only as a Drop of Water in the Ocean. 'Tis therefore in this immenſe Sea that we drown them, with an entire confidence. Conſidered in themſelves they are great, but compared to the infinite Greatneſs of God's Love for us, and the Price he hath given to deliver us, they are nothing. They ought to humble us without caſting us down, as the Mercy of God to comfort us without elevating us. God was willing to give us theſe two great objects of our Miſery and his Mercy, to keep our Soul in *Equilibrio*, or even ballance. There is always [illegible] conſidering the one without the other, but the Union of theſe two Conſiderations eſtabliſh the Soul in the true ſtate, wherein ſhe ought to be during this Life, which is that of the wholſome Fear grounded upon the Conſideration of our Miſeries, and an humble Confidence maintained by God's Mercy.

The

The Second Treatiſe.

[redacted]harity, and Self-Love.

I.

ALthough there is nothing ſo oppoſite to Charity which relates all to God, as Self-Love, which relates all to it ſelf, yet there is nothing ſo reſembling the Effects of Charity, as thoſe of Self-Love. For it marches ſo by the ſame ways, that one can hardly point out thoſe better whereunto Charity ought to carry us, than in propoſing thoſe which Self-Love takes, which knows its true Intereſts, and inclines by Reaſon to the end it propoſes it ſelf.

II.

This conformity of Effects in Principles ſo different, will not appear ſtrange to thoſe who ſhall have well conſidered the Nature of Self-Love. But to know it, he muſt firſt conſider Self-Love in it ſelf, and in its firſt bent, that he may ſee afterwards what carrieth him to diſguiſe and hide it from the ſight of the World.

III The

III.

The Name of Self-Love is not ſufficient to make us know is Nature, being we may love our ſelves divers ways. We muſt add thereunto other qualities, to form to our ſelves a true *Idea* of it. Theſe qualities are, that Man doth not only love himſelf, but he loves himſelf without limits, and without meaſure; Loves only himſelf, and refers all to himſelf. He covets all ſort of Riches, Humours, Pleaſures, and Deſires, none but for, or in relation to himſelf. He makes himſelf the Center of all; He would Lord it over it, and could wiſh that all Creatures were only employed to content him, to praiſe him, and to admire him. This tyrannical Diſpoſition being ſtamped in the bottom of all Men's Hearts, renders them Violent, Unjuſt, Cruel, Ambitious, Flatterers, Envious, Inſolent, and Quarrellous. In a Word, it includes the Seeds of all the Crimes, and of all the Miſdemeanours of Men, from the ſmalleſt, even to the moſt deteſtable ones. See here what a Monſter we harbour in our Boſoms. This Monſter lives, and reigns in us abſolutely, except God deſtroy its empire by putting another love into our Hearts. It is the Principal of all our actions, which hath no other than corrupted Nature: And ſo far is it from terrifying us, that we love, and hate all things which are out of us, only as they are conform or contrary to our Inclinations.

IV.

But if we love it in our ſelves, we are far from uſing it ſo when we perceive it in others. It appears then to us, on the contrary, under its Natural form, and we hate it by ſo much more as we love our ſelves, becauſe Self-Love of other Men oppoſes all the Deſires of ours. We would that all others ſhould love us, admire us, truckle under us, and that they ſhould be buſied

buſied with the Care of ſatisfying us. And they have not only no deſire thereto, but they look upon us as ridiculous in pretending to it, and they are ready to do all, not only to hinder us from ſucceeding in our Deſires, but to make us obnoxious to theirs, and to require the ſame things of us. Behold then by this means all Men at difference one with another; And if he who hath ſaid, that Men are born in a ſtate and condition of War, and that each Man is naturally an Enemy to all other Men, had a Mind only to repreſent by theſe words the Diſpoſition of the Hearts of Men, one towards another, without pretence of paſſing it for Legitimate and Juſt; he would have ſaid a thing as conform to Truth and Experience, as that which is maintained is contrary to Reaſon and Juſtice.

V.

It cannot poſſibly be imagined, how there can be formed Societies, Common-wealths, and Kingdoms out of this multitude of People full of paſſions, ſo contrary to Union, and who only endeavour the ruine of one another. But Self-Love which is the cauſe of this War, will eaſily tell the way how to make them live in Peace. It loves Domination, it loves to enſlave all the World to it, but it loves yet more Life and Convenientneſs, and an eaſie Life more than Domination; and ſees clearly that others are no ways diſpoſed to ſuffer themſelves to be domineer'd over, and are ſooner ready to take away from it the Goods it loves beſt. Each Man ſees himſelf in an impoſſibility of ſucceeding by Force into the Deſigns which his Ambition ſuggeſts to him, and apprehends likewiſe the loſing by that violence of others the Eſſential Goods he poſſeſſeth. 'Tis that which obliges at firſt to ſubmit ones ſelf to the care of his own Preſervation, and there is no other way found for that, but to unite ones ſelf with others, to beat back by Force thoſe who undertake to deprive us both of our Lives and Fortunes.

And

And to ſtrengthen this Union, Laws are made, and Puniſhments ordered for thoſe who violate them. Thus by the means of Tortures and Gibbets ſet up in Publick, the Thoughts and tyrannical Deſigns of every particular Man's Self-Love are with-held.

VI.

Fear of Death is then the firſt tye of Civil Society, and the firſt check of Self-Love. 'Tis that which forceth Men, what averſion ſoever they may have to obey the Laws, and which makes them in ſuch a manner forget theſe vaſt thoughts of Domination, that they hardly are raiſed any more in the Thoughts of the moſt part of them, ſo impoſſible they ſee it is for them to proſper therein.

Thus ſeeing themſelves excluded from the open Violence, they are conſtrained to ſeek other ways, and to ſubſtitute Craft for Force, and they find therein no other means than to endeavour to content the Self-Love of thoſe whom they have need of, inſtead of Tyrannizing over them.

Some endeavour to make it fit for their Intereſts, others employ Flattery to gain it. Gifts are beſtow'd to obtain it. This is the Source and Foundation of all Commerce practiſed amongſt Men, and which is varied a thouſand Ways. For they do not truck Merchandiſes for Merchandiſes or for Money, but they mutually Traffick, I mean they make a Trade alſo of Labours and Toyls, of Services done, of Diligence and Aſſiduity, of Civility; and Men exchange all that, either for things of the ſame Nature, or for real Goods, as when by Vain Complacencies we obtain Effective commodities.

'Tis thus, that by the Means and Help of this Commerce, all Neceſſaries for this Life are in ſome ſort ſupplied without intermixing Charity with it. So that in Eſtates, where Charity hath no admittance, becauſe true Religion is baniſhed from thence, Men do not

ceaſe to live with as much Peace, Safety, and Commodiouſneſs, as if they were in a Republick of Saints.

VII.

'Tis not that this tyrannical Inclination which makes us have a Deſire to Rule and Govern by Force over others, is not always lively in the Hearts of Men. But as they ſee themſelves unable to proſper therein, they are forced to diſſemble it, until they are ſtrengthened by gaining others by ſweet ways, to have afterwards the means to bring others to their bent by force. Every one therefore is mindful at firſt to occupy the firſt Rank of the Society he is of, and when he ſees himſelf excluded, he thinks of thoſe which follow. In a word, he extols himſelf the moſt he can, and he humbles himſelf only by conſtraint. In every ſtate, and in every condition he endeavours always to acquire to himſelf ſome Preheminence, Authority, Intendency, Conſideration, Juriſdiction, and to dilate his Power as much as he can. Princes wage War with their Neighbours, that they may enlarge the Limits of their Eſtates. The Officers of ſeveral Companies in one and the ſame Country, undertake and intrude upon one another: They ſtrive to ſupplant them, and to humble each other in all their Employs, and in all their Offices. And if the Wars which are made there are not ſo bloody as thoſe which Princes make; 'Tis not becauſe the Paſſions are not as quick and ſharp, but 'tis for the moſt part becauſe they dread the Puniſhment, which the Laws threaten to thoſe who have recourſe to violent ways.

VIII.

I ſee nothing more proper to repreſent this Spiritual World form'd by Concupiſcence, then the *Idea* which ſome Philoſophers give us of the Material World made by Nature; that is to ſay, of that Aſſembly of Bodies which compoſe the Univerſe. Becauſe we ſee there,

there, that every part of Matter tends naturally to move and to dilate it ſelf, and to iſſue out of its place, but being preſs'd by other Bodies, it is confin'd to a kind of a Priſon; from whence it eſcapes ſo ſoon as it finds that it has more Power and Force than the matter wherewith it is environed. Behold already the Picture of Conſtraint, whereto the Self-Love of each Particular is reduced by that of others, which does not permit it to ſet it ſelf out at large ſo much as it would. We are going to ſee all the Motions in the Sequel of this Compariſon. For theſe little confin'd Bodies coming to muſter up their Forces, and their motions do form great heaps of matter, which Philoſophers call Whirlwinds, which are as States and Kingdoms: And theſe Whirlwinds are themſelves preſſed and impriſoned by other Whirlwinds, as it were by neighbouring Kingdoms. They likewiſe will, that in each Whirlwind there are formed other ſmall ones, which following the General Motions of the great Bodies which draw them, have nevertheleſs a particular Motion, which doth force yet other ſmall Bodies to turn round about them; which repreſents the Grandees of State, who follow them in ſuch a manner, that they have their particular Intereſts, and are as the Center of a Quantity of People who fix themſelves to their Fortune. Laſtly, as theſe little Bodies drawn by the Whirlwinds, do yet turn as much as they can upon their own Center, ſo likewiſe the little ones which follow the fortune of the Grandees and that of the State, do not forbear with all their endeavours, and all their ſervices, which they render them, to look upon themſelves, and to have always their own proper Intereſt in proſpect.

IX.

That which Self-Love covets particularly in Sovereignty, is, that we be regarded looked upon by others as great and powerful, and that we ſtir up in their

Hearts motions of reſpect and ſubmiſſion, conform to theſe *Ideas*. But however, it may be the Impreſſions which are moſt agreeable to it, are not yet the only ones wherewith Self-Love doth nouriſh it ſelf. It generally loves all thoſe things which are favourable to it, as Admiration, Reſpect, Conſtancy, and chiefly Love. There are many who ſcarcely do what they ought, to make them beloved, but there are none who do not deſire to be loved, and who do not behold with great pleaſure this Propenſity in others turned towards them, which is that which is called Love. What if it appear that we labour not much to obtain this Love? 'Tis becauſe we had rather give ſentiments of Fear and Submiſſion under Greatneſs, or becauſe, deſiring too paſſionately to pleaſe certain Perſons, we trouble our ſelves very little to pleaſe others.

X.

Yet this does not hinder but that even when we are carried away by more ſtrong Paſſions, we behave our ſelves after a faſhion very improper to make us be beloved, yet would be beloved; and do not perceive our ſelves incommoded, when we ſee in the Minds of others, motions of Hatred and Averſion. There are likewiſe many People, in whom this Inclination of making themſelves be beloved is ſtronger than that of Domineering and Lording over Men, and who fear more Mens Hatred and Averſion, and the Judgments which produceth it, than they love to be Rich and Powerful. Laſtly, Whereas there are few great ones, and few likewiſe who are able to aſpire to Greatneſs, on the contrary, there is none who cannot pretend to make himſelf be beloved.

XI.

If the deſire of being loved is not the ſtrongeſt Paſſion which ſprings from Self-Love, at leaſt it is the moſt

moſt general. The Conſiderations of Intereſt, of Ambition, of Pleaſure, ſtop many times the effects of it, but they do it not effectively. It is always active at the bottom of the Heart, and ſo ſoon as it is at Liberty, it forbears not being active, and to make us deſire all that is able to procure us the love of Men, as it makes us avoid all whatſoever we think may draw upon us their hatred. It is true, we are ſometimes deceived in the diſtinction which we make of theſe things, which draw Love or Hatred, and that there are ſome who judge thereof much better, and more nicely than others. But be it that we are deceived therein, or that we be not, 'tis always the ſame Paſſion which acts, and which flies or ſeeks the ſame Objects. There is alſo a common Diſtinction for all Men, even to a certain Degree; that that is to ſay, they know every one, even to ſome point, that certain actions excite Hatred, and others cauſe Love.

XII.

It is not needful to dive further into the Deſcription of the Retreats of Self-Love, to comprehend how it imitates very much Charity. It is ſufficient to ſay, that Self-Love hindring us through fear of Chaſtiſement to violate the Laws, doth remove us by this means outwardly from all the Crimes, and ſo render us like to thoſe who avoid them through Charity. That as Charity comforts the Neceſſities of others in the ſight of God, who will that we acknowledge his Favours in helping our Neighbour. Likewiſe Self-Love comforts them in the ſight of their proper Intereſt. And that laſtly, There is hardly any action whereto we are carried by Charity that would pleaſe God, whereunto Self-Love cannot engage us to pleaſe Men.

XIII. But

XIII.

But though Self-Love tend by theſe three Motions to counterfeit Charity, we muſt for all that allow that the laſt comes nearer to it, and that it is much more extended than the two others. For there are many occaſions, where neither Fear nor Intereſt have any place. And we diſtinguiſh often eaſily enough what we do, either through Humane Fear or through abſolute Intereſt, from what we do by a Motive of Charity. But it is not the ſame Love, and eſteem for Men. This Inclination is ſo Nice, and Subtile, and at the ſame time of ſuch a Latitude, that there is nothing it cannot enter into; and it knows ſo well how to trim it ſelf up with the appearances of Charity, that it is almoſt impoſſible to know exquiſitly what diſtinguiſhes it from Charity. Becauſe marching in the ſame Steps, and producing the ſame Effects, it defaces with a Marvellous ſubtilty all the Signs and Characters of Self-Love from whence it ſprings, becauſe it ſees very well that it could obtain nothing of what it pretends, if they were taken notice of. The reaſon of it is, becauſe nothing doth draw upon us ſo much the thing called Averſion, as Self-Love, and becauſe it cannot ſhew it ſelf without exciting it. We experience this our ſelves in regard of the Self-Love of others. We are not able to ſuffer it ſo ſoon as we diſcover it, and it is eaſie for us to judge by that, that they are not more favourable to ours when they diſcover it.

'Tis this which inclines thoſe who are ſenſible of the hatred of Men, and who love not to expoſe themſelves thereunto to endeavour to withdraw as much as in them lies, their Self-Love from the ſight of others, to diſguiſe and counterfeit it, never to ſhew it under its natural ſhape, to imitate the Behaviour of thoſe who would be intirely exempt from it; that is to ſay, Perſons animated with the ſpirit of Charity. and who would not act but through Charity.

XIV. This

XIV.

This ſuppreſſion of Self-Love, is properly that which makes Humane Civility, and ſhews in what it conſiſteth. And 'tis this which hath cauſed a Learned Man of this Age, to ſay that Chriſtian Virtue deſtroys and annihilates Self-Love, and that Humane Civility hides and ſuppreſſes it.

Thus this Civility which hath been the Idol of the Learned Pagans, is nothing at the bottom, but a Self-Love more intelligent and exact, than that of the Generality of the World, which knows how to ſhun what hurts its deſigns, and which tends to its mark, which is the eſteem and love of Men by a more ſtraight and reaſonable way, in ſhewing how Self-Love doth imitate the principal actions of Charity.

XV.

'Tis no hard matter to comprehend in what manner Charity renders us humble. For making us love Juſtice, which is God himſelf, it makes us hate Injuſtice, which is contrary to him. Now 'tis an Injuſtice very viſible, that being as we are full of Faults, and guilty of ſo many Sins, we would be honoured of Men, and that we ſhould pretend to deſerve their Praiſes either by Humane Qualities, and ſo conſequently Vain and Frivolous, or by Gifts, which we have received of God, and which do not belong unto us. It is not juſt that a Sinner be honoured, but it is juſt that he be humbled and brought low. 'Tis the Eternal Law which ordains it, and Charity conſents to this Law. Charity loves it, and by the love which it bears to it, embraces with joy all Humiliations and Humblings. Charity makes us hate all that ſmells of Pride and Vanity; and as it condemns theſe Motions when they ſtart up in our Hearts, it hinders them alſo from appearing without by words and actions, which it reduces thus to an exact modeſty.

XVI.

Yet there is nothing in this, but what Self-Love imitates perfectly; For seeing the Heart of each Man turned absolutely towards it self, and naturally an Enemy to the preferring any other: It dares not expose it self to their Thought and Malignity.

Whoever praises himself, and sets to sale what he thinks he hath that's good, pretends thereby to bring others to him, and 'tis almost the same thing, as if he beg'd of them to give him praises, and to look upon him with Esteem and Love. Now there is hardly any Prayer which appears more uncivil, and more incommodious to Self love, which Men bear themselves, than this. It is angry and vexed at it, and answers only by Scoffing and Disdain. Thus those who are cunning enough to know these tricks and devices, avoid making these kind of demands; that is to say, they keep themselves generally to a distance from all that seems Vanity, from all that tends to make them be taken notice of, and to shew these advantages; and they endeavour on the contrary to appear not to heed them, nor to know them in themselves. And that is the modesty, Civility is able to procure.

XVII.

Civility doth not only flie these means and base vain Glories, and the declared Commendations which Man gives himself; but knowing that Self-Love of others is extreamly subtile in discovering the by-ways which may be taken to make manifest in us what we desire to shew thereby: Civility renounces these small Crafts, and studies to avoid them. It would force us rather to speak of our selves directly and publickly, than to make use of these wicked Trucks, because Civility always fears being surprised therein, and knows that when Men perceive them, they take a great delight to turn and make them ridiculous.

Thus

Thus you ſee there is nothing more ſimple and humble than theſe Diſcourſes. Civility does not Publiſh nor ſhew it ſelf by any way, and in a word, it hath for a general rule, never to ſpeak of it ſelf, or if it do, 'tis with more coldneſs and indifferency than of others.

XVIII.

Thoſe who have heard ſpeak of the War maintain'd by the two chief Captains of this Age, have always been raviſhed with the Civility and Modeſty of their Diſcourſe. No Man hath ever obſerved, that the leaſt word on this Subject that could be ſuſpected of vanity hath been ſpoken by them. They have always been ſeen to do Juſtice to all others, but never to themſelves, and one would have believed, to have heard them make a relation of ſome Battels wherein they have had the greateſt ſhare, both by their Conduct and Valour, that even they were not there, or if they were, that it was without acting any thing. Let Men read that News which came to *Paris* after the Battel of *Senef*, they will find therein that great Action half diminiſhed. It ſeems that the Prince of *Conde* was but a Spectator therein. He was every where, and it appears he was hardly in any part; and never was any thing more leſſen'd than what he contributed to the ſucceſs of this great Combat. I think that if St. *Lewis* ſent formerly Relations of what he acted in *Egypt*, they were deſcribed like this. So much reſemblance have Holineſs and Civility in their outward Deeds, and tend equally to hinder that nothing that's vain may appear therein, there being only this one difference between the one and the other, that Holineſs is ſtruck with the injuſtice of Vanity in relation to God, and Civility is concerned for its meanneſs in relation to Men.

XIX.

Moreover, the fear which Civility hath of exciting against it ſelf the natural averſion all Men have for the vanity of another, may yet have in this Conduct a more cunning and delicate ſentiment of this Pride, which is born with Man, and which never abandons him. Theſe People which we ſee ſo buſied with ſome affairs wherein they have ſignalized themſelves that they have aſtoniſhed all the World, as *Cicero* did by his Conſulſhip make appear thereby that Virtue is not at all natural to them, and that they had need of great ſtrength to hoiſt up their Souls to the condition wherein they are ſo glad to ſhew themſelves. But there is more Grandeur not to make reflection upon their great Actions, ſo that they ſeem to eſcape us, and that they ſpring ſo naturally from the Diſpoſition of the Soul that ſhe is not aware of them. This degree of Virtue is doubtleſs much more Heroick, and it is of this which Human Civility, when it is at its height, endeavours, without thinking of it expreſly, to give the *Idea*; or which it imitates by Cunning and Policy, when it is not perfect, and proceeds rather from Reaſon than from Nature.

XX.

Who could chuſe but love that well-bred Man, of whom a great Wit of this Age hath made this Deſcription. *Man does not paſs in the World*, ſaid he, *for being known in Verſe, unleſs he hang out the Sign of a Poet, nor for an Able Man in* Mathematicks, *without that of a Mathematician. But the true Well-bred Men will have no Signs, and hardly put any difference betwixt the Profeſſion of a Poet and that of an Ambaſſador. They are called neither Poets nor Geometricians, but they Judge of all thoſe. Man does not conjecture it; they will ſpeak of things which Men ſpoke of when they entred; there is not perceived in them*

them one quality more then another, barring a neceſſity of putting it in uſe, but then they are mindful of it. Becauſe it equally belongs to the Character, that we ſay not of them that they ſpeak well when there is no queſtion of the Language, and that we ſay of them, That they ſpeak well when there is a queſtion of it. 'Tis therefore a falſe Commendation, when one ſaith of a Man when he comes in, That he is skilful in Poetry, and 'tis an ill Sign when Men have recourſe to him, only becauſe he is able to judge of ſome Verſes. Man is full of buſineſs; he loves only thoſe who are able to employ him in it. He is a good Mathematician, one will ſay, but I have nothing to do with Mathematicks. He is a Man who underſtands War well, but I will not wage War with any one. We muſt therefore have a Man who can adapt himſelf to all our Affairs.

It is impoſſible not to love a Man thus qualified. But why do we love him? 'Tis becauſe he ſeems to be made for others, and not for himſelf. He troubles not our Self-love by an importunate affectation, he pretends not to force us to praiſe him in making appear in him what we would not ſee. If he ſhews us what is good in him, 'tis for us that he ſhews it. Civility rendring us ſenſible of theſe favourable Judgments and Opinions which it diſcovers in the Minds of others, by this proceeding forces it ſelf to deſerve them in following it.

XXI.

We may diſcover by this, wherefore the ſame actions may be civil in ſome Men, and not ſo in others. This happens for that they are leſs affected in ſome, and becauſe Self-love ſhews it ſelf leſs, and teſtifies leſs deſire to apply Men to it. Let a Man, ſuch an one as Mr. *Vaugelas*, whoſe profeſſion is to ſtudy Languages, make a Book wherein he obſerves, both the good and bad faſhions of ſpeaking, thoſe which are in uſe at Court, and thoſe which ſmell of the Country, no Man can find fault therewith: 'Tis a Man who makes it his Trade,

Trade, and he may have had in that a laudable Conſideration to render this Service to the publick. But if it ſhould fall out, for example, that a Prieſt, or a Religious Man being angry at fine Wit, would make Collections of ſome Words which were ſaid in the Streets, and in Places which he ought not to know, that he would appear full of eſteem for Gallantry, and for the Converſation of Ladies, it could by no means be ſuffered. All the World would become Spiritual at his coſt, and whether through Malice, or through an Opinion of Religion, would make a thouſand reflections upon the diſproportion of ſome thoughts, wherein he might buſie himſelf, from the Holineſs of his Office and his Profeſſion. Inſomuch that when Men take delight in his Book, either becauſe there would be ſomething that's good therein, or becauſe there would be ſome body who might be ill dealt withal, which is always agreeable, they eſteem the Perſon of the Author leſs, and find themſelves leſs diſpoſed to chooſe him either for Friend or Counſellor.

XXII.

It is needleſs to prove that Charity is yet more removed from affectation, than meer Civility. For loving others but not it ſelf, it hath nothing to do but to follow its Natural Motions, to act with a perfect Civility. It does it ſo much better, by how much it does it more ſincerely, and that there is nothing of counterfeit in it. Whereas this civility of Self-love is for the moſt part not ſo uniform. If Civility repreſs it in one part, Self-love ſhews it ſelf ſometimes in another, and ſo leaves ſome little diſguſt of it ſelf, to thoſe who obſerve it narrowly. But as that happens but againſt its intention, it is aſham'd being aware of it, or rather perceiving that others did obſerve it.

Thus it is always true to ſay, that when Self-love follows reaſon exactly in the ſearch of eſteem, and affection of Men, it imitates perfectly Charity, ſo that

in

in conſulting it upon exterior actions it makes us the ſame anſwer that Charity does, and engages us in the ſame ways.

XXIII.

If for Example, one ask Charity, in what diſpoſition we ought to be concerning the ſubject of our Faults, ſhe will tell us that we ought extreamly to contemn our ſelves as to our own under[illegible] regard of thoſe we think we have not; and [illegible] perſwaſion wherein we ought to be in general of our blindneſs in this Point, ought to diſpoſe us more to believe others in this than our ſelves; But in reſpect of faults which we ſhall be convinced of, there would be nothing more unjuſt than to counterfeit, and deſtroy in ſome ſort the Light of God it ſelf, by pretending to juſtifie what it condemns; and thus the leaſt we can do to eſcape this Pride ſo criminal, is to acknowledge them ſincerely, and to humble our ſelves before God and Man.

XXIV.

Let us now propoſe the ſame queſtion to Self-love, and we ſhall ſee if it ſpeak not the ſame language at the bottom of the Heart, it gives yet the ſame counſel. Tho it be hard, it will ſay, to acknowledge our faults, and deſire to deface them, and blot them out of the memory of Man, as well as out of our own, it is evident nevertheleſs that that is impoſſible. The more we ſhall ſtrive to diſguiſe them from others, the more ingenious they will be to diſcover them, and wicked to make them take notice of. This ſame deſire of Concealing them will paſs in their Minds for the greateſt of Faults, and we ſhall do nothing in ſtriving either to diſſemble them or to maintain them, but draw hatred or diſdain upon our ſelves. We muſt therefore neceſſarily ſteer another courſe. If we cannot have the glory

glory of being without Faults, we muſt have that of knowing them, and not being Cheats to our ſelves. *Bellum eſt ſua vitia noſſe*, Let us take away then from others the pleaſure of taking notice of them, in obſerving them our ſelves firſt, and thereby diſarming their wickedneſs.

'Tis upon the like Conſiderations that Civility forms its Conduct, and 'tis that which carries it to make an open profeſſion of acknowledging ſincerely all its Faults, [redacted] it ill that others obſerve them, and by this means it gains the reputation of an amiable equity, which makes it judge of it ſelf clearly, and without paſſion, which knows how to juſtifie it ſelf, and with which one may be at quiet, without being obliged outwardly to teſtifie that one approves what indeed one approves not.

XXV.

It is eaſie to be diſcerned by what has been ſaid, that Charity and Self-love ſhould be very conform as to the receiving reprehenſions and advertiſements, and that ſome very different conſiderations and motives ought to unite them in the ſame outward conduct. We know well enough that to which Charity ſways us; For looking upon theſe Advertiſements, as a very great good, and a favourable Means to deliver us from our Faults, Charity receives them not only with joy, but with greedineſs and avidity. The bitterneſs it ſelf which accompanies them is agreeable to it, as procuring us the ſatisfaction of Humility, and weakening Self-love, which Charity eſteems as its worſt enemy. Thus 'tis ſo far from ſhewing any diſguſt or ſharpneſs of ſpeech to thoſe who procure us this good, that it forgets nothing that may teſtifie its gratefulneſs; to comfort them in the fear they have of hurting us, to incline them to do us ſometimes the ſame favour, and to free them from all doubts which may make them reſerved, and keep them in torment and conſtraint.

XXVI. In

XXVI.

In truth Self-love is always inwardly very far removed from this diſpoſition. It loves not that others take notice of our Faults, and much leſs that they admoniſh us of them. But yet it acts outwardly as Charity does. For learning by theſe admonitions which are given us, the bad impreſſion Men have of us, Reaſon makes Self-love conclude preſently, that it muſt be leſſen'd, or at leaſt not augmented; and conſulting afterwards other Mens Minds to learn how we ought to guide ours, Self-love eaſily acknowledge that nothing is a greater ſtumbling-block than the haughtineſs of thoſe, who are not able to endure to be admoniſh'd of any of their Faults, who rebel againſt Truth, and who could wiſh that all the World were blind in reſpect of them, or would ſuppreſs their thoughts, ſo ſoon as they are not for their advantage; and on the contrary nothing is more agreeable to People than to be freed from this reſiſtance, and to ſee that they put a ſtop to their judgments, and to their light, and thus in ſome ſort they ſubmit themſelves to their Empire. Self-love therefore without heſitating takes this laſt Part, and thereby makes us inſinuate our ſelves ſo agreeably into the Hearts of thoſe who reprove us, that they love thoſe who humble themſelves in that manner much better, what faults ſoever they have, than thoſe who having none, have not opportunity to give them this ſatisfaction. Becauſe we muſt obſerve that our faults are not of themſelves contrary to the Self-love of others, and likewiſe that the braveſt qualities of themſelves, are not pleaſing to it. 'Tis the relation theſe faults, and theſe brave qualities have with them. So that if theſe faults make us more humble in reſpect of them, or if theſe brave qualities render us more haughty, they will love us with theſe faults, and hate us with all thoſe brave qualities.

XXVII. It

XXVII.

It is manifeſt that this conduct aims directly at leaſt at Self-love, which is to obtain the eſteem or the friendſhip of Men. And therefore Human civility never fails to follow it, and often even does it more exactly than true Piety, when it is not perfect. Becauſe as Charity is leſs active than Self-love, it happens often alſo that Pious People appear more ſenſible, and more delicate than Civil Worldly Men, when advertiſed of their Faults, which are obſerved in their Conduct, or in their Labours, becauſe in theſe Occurrences, not having a very lively Charity, they lack alſo this Self-love, which is a Supplement in regard of outward Actions.

XXVIII.

The Conduct which Charity obſerves towards Civil Men, when we are prepoſſeſſed with unjuſt ſuſpicions, and unreaſonable Impreſſions of them, is not to reprove them, and ſhew diſcontent and malice, but to juſtifie them in teſtifying that they are not aſtoniſhed that being Men, they are ſuſpected of Human frailties, and in a word not to complain of theſe ſuſpicions, but to labour to cure them; becauſe we ought to look upon them as very dangerous for thoſe that have them, and that the way to free them from them, is not to reprove them when they are not perſwaded that they are in the wrong, but to ſhew them gently the falſity of their ſuſpicions to oblige them, by this means to condemn them their own ſelves.

XXIX.

In truth if we follow on theſe occaſions, the firſt motives of Self-love, we ſhall be very far from this moderation. They will be on the contrary only Paſſions full

full of Reſentments and Bitterneſs. But if we conſult Reaſon, with a reſolution to follow it to arrive at laſt at what we ought, which is to blot out theſe ſuſpicions, which are ſo injurious, and to ſtabliſh our reputation in the Minds of thoſe who have received them, it is neceſſary that we take the ſame way. Becauſe all that ſeems paſſion and trouble of the Mind, is only capable to increaſe the bad Impreſſions Men have harboured of us. And whereas oftentimes there is only the Mind which is prepoſſeſſed therewith, we by bitterneſs carry it into the Will it ſelf, and make it endeavour to maintain the Impreſſions of the Mind. Thus Self-Love foreſeeing this Evil effect, is reduced, how unwilling ſoever it may be, to imitate this ſweet and moderate conduct which Charity preſcribes.

XXX.

Who would ever believe that Self-Love, even when it ſhould have intention to cry down its Enemies, to render them odious, and to make them condemn'd by all the World of Baſeneſs and Injuſtice, could not do better to proſper therein, than to follow the ſteps of Charity? Yet this happens very often. For there is nothing for the moſt part, which makes Baſe and Uncivil Proccedings which are uſed towards us, appear better, than to withſtand thoſe by a proceſsfull of Civility and Moderation. This oppoſition, which ſhews the difference of theſe two contrary conducts, makes the one and the other more apparent. Civility appears more lovely on the one ſide, and Baſeneſs more ſhameful on the other. And in this manner Self-Love hath all it pretends, which is, that we raiſe our ſelves, and humble thoſe who have offended us.

XXXI.

I remember upon this Subject, that when a certain Book was publiſhed, in which the Author pretended

to have gathered together divers and ſundry Faults againſt the Language, which he thought he had found in ſome works of Piety, which paſſed for well written, it was examined in a Society by a way of Diſcourſe, what thoſe who were concerned therein ought to do on this ſcore; Each Man agreed preſently that the remarks of this Author being inconſiderable, ought not to be propoſed againſt the ſame Writings, becauſe there was no other end in it, but that of acquiring the Reputation of Writing well; thoſe whom it attack'd, ought not to have the leaſt thought of forming a conteſt upon ſo frivolous an occaſion, how much to blame ſoever this Author might be in ſome of his Remarks. But when we came to ſpeak of what they ought to do, we were not of the ſame mind. There were ſome who would maintain, that they ought not to affirm that they had ſeen this Book. But the Generality believed that they ought to take other meaſures, and that for full anſwer they needed only correct Honeſtly and Faithfully in the other Editions of thoſe Books, all that this Author had diſallowed therein with any gloſs of Juſtice. The reaſon which they alledge for it, beſides the general Motive of honouring Truth in every thing, is, that there was no better way, whereby the Publick can do this Author, and thoſe whom it ſhould have attack'd, Juſtice, than by uſing them ſo moderately. I confeſs that I was of this Opinion, and that I thought there was none more conform, neither to Charity, which always tends to humble us, nor to Self-Love, which is glad to place in ſight the Faults of thoſe who have a Deſire to abaſe us. I will alſo praiſe it very willingly, if I have occaſion to do it, without any pretence whatſoever of obliging any one to believe that it is an act of Humility, being I acknowledge that it may very eaſily have another Principle.

XXXII. 'Tis

XXXII.

'Tis thus that Charity and Civility accord together to make appear outwardly the ſame Sentiment, in what regards our good and bad Qualities; and it is not hard to judge thereby that they do the ſame in what regards others, We ſee eaſily whereto Charity inclines, in reſpect of the Good it obſerves in others. As Charity rejoyces at it inwardly, it teſtifies alſo its joy outwardly, all manner of ways poſſible, and far from endeavouring to obſerve it; Charity uſeth its power to heighten it and make it eſteemed. Other Mens good is its proper good, through the love it bears them, and it ſtops there more cheerfully, than at its own, becauſe it fears not therein Complacency and Vanity.

XXXIII.

It would ſeem at firſt, that there could be no reaſon to hope the like conduct from Self-Love. For it is ſo far from having this Goodneſs and Kindneſs for others, that on the contrary it is naturally Wicked, Jealous, Envious, full of Gall and Venom. All that puffs up others Incommodes, and vexes it, and one hardly ſees it really favourable to the Praiſes given them, except ſome profit may be drawn from thence, and that they make uſe of it as a Step to raiſe themſelves.

But although one perceive in himſelf all theſe Motives, nevertheleſs, when one conſiders the Effect they would make upon the Minds of others, if one ſhould ſhew them publickly, one would immediately conclude to keep them Secret, We ſee clearly that that would be the way to make ones ſelf look'd upon as a common and publick Enemy, and would thereby become the Object of hatred, and the Abomination of all the World. We ſhould not only be odious to thoſe againſt whom we would exerciſe our wickedneſs, but even to thoſe we

would ſpare, no body being able to aſſure himſelf to receive Juſtice from People in whom this evil Plat-form is found, and every one fearing, with reaſon, to become the object of their Jealouſie. Civility makes us therefore take juſtly the contrary way. It makes us affect to ſhew outwardly an extream equity to praiſe voluntarily what is Praiſe-worthy, to ſet a value as great as we can on other Mens good qualities, and not to refuſe even to our Enemies our Teſtimonies of eſteem which they deſerve; and by this means we proſper in the Deſign of making our ſelves beloved, we acquire Friends, we pacifie our Enemies, and we keep a good Correſpondence with all the World.

XXXIV.

'Tis by theſe Conſiderations, that Civility doth manifeſt an extream Indulgence for other Men's Faults, and far from exaggerating or divulging them, doth hide and excuſe them as much as it can; never contemns any Man, explicates all to the beſt, is eaſily ſatisfied, and affects not to be curious and ſubtil in diſcovering Peoples Faults who are generally eſteem'd, avoids raſh and ill-grounded ſuſpicions, and had rather, in ſome ſort, be deceived, than give way to ſuſpicions which are hurtful to its Neighbour. All this tends directly, at leaſt to Self-Love. For as we cannot be ignorant but that we have Faults, we hate much more thoſe whom we judge will Scorn us when they ſhall perceive them, and we cannot on the contrary but love thoſe from whom we hope for ſome Support, Condeſcendence, and Favour.

XXXV.

If Charity be patient in Injuries, becauſe it endeavours to aſſwage the ſharpneſs of thoſe who hurt us, it does it that we may ſuffer all ſorts of bad uſage joyfully, to ſatisfie God's Juſtice, and perſuades us that we

we deſerve yet worſe. Self-Love hath alſo a Patience of Intereſt and Vanity, which outwardly produceth the ſame Effects. It hinders us for paſſing for proud and preſumptuous. It teaches us, That 'tis good not to vex or provoke People too much, and thereupon makes us diſſemble the Injuries which we receive.

If Charity be kind through a ſincere deſire of ſerving others, Self-Love will alſo that we be ſo, to rule thereby in their Minds, and to enjoy the Inclinations which theſe good Turns excite therein.

If Charity endeavour to conceal it ſelf when it does good to others, that it may not attribute any thing to it ſelf, Self-Love does as much to enjoy it more fully, becauſe we hold our ſelves ſo much more obliged, by how much more he who does a good turn does it privately.

If Charity extend its good turns to thoſe from whom nothing is expected, and even to Enemies, as regarding nothing but their good, and not its own intereſt: Self-Love does the ſame, as knowing by how much more good turns do appear diſintereſſed, and free from all Self-ſeeking, by ſo much more they obtain a general Affection, by a hope they give to all the World of receiving the like.

If Charity be thankful towards the World, becauſe its Gratitude towards God diffuſeth it ſelf over all the Inſtruments which it makes uſe of to procure us happineſs: Self-Love makes us earneſtly deſire to be ſo, for fear of diſturbing the Happineſs of others who expect it, and is troubled when it fails therein.

Laſtly, If Charity makes us Faithful towards all the World through a ſincere love of Juſtice, Self-Love makes us practice the ſame Fidelity to obtain Mens Aſſurance.

XXXVI.

Charity, as the Apoſtle ſaith, is not Ambitious, becauſe thoſe who are ſo, have but little eſteem for Hu-

mane and Temporal Greatneſs which Ambition ſeeks; becauſe they fear them more than they deſire them, and find themſelves alway happy in the Condition wherein God hath placed them. We cannot ſay ſo much of Humane Civility, and if we will judge of it by its *Baſis* or Ground-work, this Civility is not only ſubject to Ambition, but is indeed nothing elſe but a curious and delicate Ambition, and yet endeavours outwardly to imitate Charity. For it knows ſo well how to conceal its Ambitious Deſires, for fear of meeting with oppoſition in the Self-Love of others, which is always on its Guard on that ſide, that one would ſay, it had not any pretence, that it had only a care for others, and that it had abſolutely forgot it ſelf. If it think of raiſing it ſelf, 'tis without trouble and meanneſs, and it does it ſo well as if Fortune ſeemed always to come and find it ſelf, without being able to make any retreat or any advance to obtain it

XXXVII.

There are ſome likewiſe which Self-Love puſhes further, and to whom it gives an effective ſeparation from great Fortunes and great Employs, though poſſibly they might arrive thereunto. The ſatisfaction of a ſweet and quiet Life, in which we entertain a great quantity of brave Friendſhips, and render ſervice to many Perſons of Quality and Worth, without Intereſt and Dependence, in contenting our ſelves to have got in the World the reputation of a Civil, Obliging, Diſintereſſed Man, and a good Friend. This Life, I ſay, hath Charms which are able to make it preferred before all the greatneſs in the World, through a Wiſe or Diſcreet Self-Love, and which knows how to compare the Advantages and Diſadvantages of divers States. This is the *Idea* which *Pomponius Atticus* propoſed to himſelf, and which he followed ſo happily, that being found amongſt many Diſſenting Parties, who in his time tore in pieces the Republick of *Rome*, he was always

ways Friend to all, and ſerved them without diſpleaſing any. We ſee yet that there are of *Atticus*'s Followers or Imitators, and it may be ſaid to their advantage, that if it were permitted or poſſible to be happy in this Life, they would have found out the Secret of it, and that their choice is infinitely wiſer than that of others; who being always deſirous to raiſe themſelves by a boundleſs Ambition, do thereby deprive themſelves of two principal goods of Life, which are Security and Repoſe.

XXXVIII.

Likewiſe it is eaſie to ſee, thas as Charity ſeparates us from the pleaſure of the Senſes, becauſe it keeps the Soul in order, and permits it to cleave to God only; Civility ought to do the ſame, becauſe the Subjection to Corporal Pleaſures hath always ſomething of mean and contemptible, which debaſes and diſfigures the *Idea* of us, which Self-Love deſires to imprint in the Minds of others. We have alſo reaſon to be diſtruſtful of thoſe who are governed by their Paſſions and Pleaſures, and to fear from them all ſort of Baſeneſſes and Injuries. For what aſſurance can one have that their Paſſion will not overſway them, when it ſhall be contrary to their Duty towards Men, being we ſee it ſways them ſo often in what is their Duty to God.

Thus Civility, which will above all conſerve the Reputation of an inviolable Fidelity, and of an inflexible firmneſs in Duties, affects to appear free from this Paſſion for Pleaſures, which gives ſo juſt an occaſion of Diſtruſt.

XXXIX.

Laſtly, not to urge this Conformity of Charity and Self-Love to a troubleſome rehearſal, I ſhall content my ſelf to add what I have ſaid of it, that it is very

true, that Self-Love may imitate all the Actions of Charity, and insinuate it self often into those wherein it seems it may have the least share, and which are design'd to Mortifie and to destroy it.

It can sometimes make Religious Persons Fast, or at least asswage one part of the trouble of their Fast. The Hair Cloaths and Discipline are sometimes for their Use, and there is hardly any Humiliation which Self Love is not capable to practice; and although it find not its accompt in Solitude, in Silence, and in secret Austerities, there are perchance certain hidden Passages, and certain Subterraneous Ways, through which it might (may be) find some Entrance. In fine, Self-Love is also capable to make us suffer even Death with Joy; and to the end there may be no certain way to distinguish it from Charity by Martyrdoms, the Saints do teach us after St. *Paul*, that there are Martyrs of Vanity as well as of Charity. Therefore St. *Austin* having said, *That Vanity doth imitate so exactly the Works of Charity, that there is almost no difference at all betwixt their Effects, that Charity doth nourish the Poor, and that Vanity doth so likewise; that Charity Fasteth, that Vanity can Fast also; that these Works do strike us, but that we cannot distinguish which come from a good and which from an ill Principle. He adds at last, that Charity dies, and brings us at the end to Martyrdom and that Vanity dies also and suffereth Martyrdom. Videte qualia opera faciat Superbia, quam similia faciat & prope paria Charitati. Pascit Esurientem Charitas, Pascit & Superbia, Charitas ut Deus laudetur, Superbia ut ipsa laudetur. Jejunat Charitas, jejunat & Superbia. Opera videmus, in operibus non discernimus. Moritur Charitas, Moritur Superbia.*

XL.

But there is this difference betwixt the hard, troublesome, and humbling actions of Virtue, and those which have nothing but what is Beautiful without being troublesome, that when Self-Love persuades Men to Humility,

Humility, Patience, and to Suffering, 'tis by a kind of unuſualneſs or diſorder. For it is evident, for example, that the way to attain to our end, which we propoſe, is not to ſhut our ſelves up in Solitude to have no converſe with Men, or to have nothing ſpoken of but our Sins and Faults. And thus it is almoſt impoſſible that there be any who embrace this kind of Life ſo contrary to the Inclinations of Nature, and who perſevere therein by other Motives, than thoſe of Salvation. But it is not the ſame with the moſt part of the actions of Virtue, which may be done in the World. Self-Love obtains its ends better by practiſing them. It cannot omit them without looſing what it aims at: And it muſt be carried away by ſome unreaſonable paſſion againſt its true Intereſts, to follow any other road but this.

XLI.

Thus one may ſay truly, that abſolutely to reform the World, that's to ſay, to baniſh all the Vices, and all the groſs Diſorders therein, and to make Mankind happy even in this Life, there needs only inſtead of Charity, to give every one a harmleſs Self-Love, which may be able to diſcern its true Intereſts, and to incline thereto by the ways which true Reaſon ſhall diſcover to it. How corrupt ſoever this whole Society may be within, and in the ſight of God, there would be nothing without, better ordered, more Civilly, more Juſt, more Peaceable, more Honeſt, more Generous, and what would be more admirable, 'tis that not being animated and ſtir'd but by Self-Love, Self Love would not appear at all there, and being abſolutely void of Charity, we ſhould ſee every where nothing but the Form and Characters of Charity.

XLII.

Perhaps it would not be amiſs, that thoſe who are charged with the Education of great Perſons, ſhould have

have this engraven in their Minds, to the end that if they ſhould not be able to inſpire them with theſe Sentiments of Charity, which they would gladly do, they ſhould endeavour at leaſt to form their Self-Love, and teach them how the moſt part of the ways which they take to content this Self-Love are falſe, ill underſtood, and contrary to their true Intereſts, and how it would be facile for them to take ſome others, which would conduct them without trouble to Honour and Glory, and would get them the Affection, the Eſteem, and the Admiration of all the World. If they ſhould not proſper by this means to render them uſeful to themſelves, they would at leaſt make them uſeful for others, and would put them in a way which would always be leſs remote from the way to Heaven, than that which they take, ſeeing that it would be only to change the End, and the Intention, to render themſelves as agreeable to God by a truly Chriſtian Virtue; as they would be to Man by the ſplendor of this Humane Civility to which we would form them.

XLIII.

But it would be of little or no moment that theſe two Principles ſo different, the one whereof bears the fruits of Life, the other of Death, ſhould be confounded in the outward Actions, at leaſt if it were eaſie for every one to know diſtinctly that which makes him do it, to the end that he may be able to judge thereby of his Actions and Condition. What is more ſtrange, is, that many times this Mixture and this Confuſion begins in the Heart it ſelf, ſo that we cannot diſtinguiſh whether 'tis through Charity or Self-Love that we act, whether 'tis God or our ſelves we ſeek for, whether 'tis for Heaven or Hell we labour. This obſcurity proceeds from divers Cauſes; and I will take notice here of the three Principal ones.

XLIV. The

XLIV.

The firſt is, that theſe Conſiderations of the Judgments of Men, and the Motions of their Hearts in regard of us which are the Rule, the Source, and the object of Humane Civility, are not always accompanied with formal and expreſs Reflections, and that the Motions which they produce, are yet more imperceptible to us. Theſe are often in reſpect of the Mind, only as certain Looks, and certain tranſitory Thoughts, by which it is carried, as by ſtealth towards theſe Judgments, which are made of us, and in reſpect of the Heart only, as certain hidden Propenſities, which ſtop it gently on this ſide; ſo that we do not make any expreſs Reflection, neither on this Propenſity, nor on the Thoughts which produceth it, although that may be the thing which gives the Motion to our outward Actions, and which is the Principle thereof.

XLV.

The Second is, That it may often happen, that even when we are not removed in effect but through fear of Diſpleaſing Men, or through a deſire to Pleaſe them. We have not abſolutely any Knowledge, nor any diſtinct Thoughts, neither of the one nor the other; and that becauſe we act often without a diſtinct Knowledge, and by a ſimple Cuſtom, which is not guided, unleſs by confuſed Thoughts, being forced to look upon certain Actions, as able to bring upon us publick Infamy, and the hatred of Honeſt Men, it forms it ſelf in the Mind a confuſed Idea thereof, which repreſents them to us as hateful and odious, without troubling the Mind why. And this idea ſufficeth to ſtir up in the Heart a motion of Horror, Averſion, and Separation. Now the confuſed Idea's, and theſe Motions which follow them, come ſo near to the true Conſiderations of Charity, which make it hate the evil

evil actions which they include, that there is hardly any but God who can diſcern the Difference betwixt them.

XLVI.

The third is, that even when we have Charity in the Heart, and that it carries us to objects which are proper for it; Nevertheleſs, becauſe Cupidity marcheth many times the ſame ways, and tends to the ſame Objects, though by different Motives, it makes a Hotchpotch in the Mind, and in the Heart of theſe two Conſiderations and Motions, without our knowing certainly which it is that carries it, and which is the true principle of our Actions. We ſeek God and the World at once; the Heart is very glad to pleaſe the one and the other, and knows, not whether 'tis God he relates to the World, or the World to God. This difference cannot be diſcovered, but by penetrating a certain Ground-plot which is the Heart, and which is not evidently known but by God alone.

XLVII.

Behold what is the ordinary condition of Men in this Life, even when they they love God. Self-Love acts more groſly in ſome than others, but it lives and acts in all to ſuch a degree, and it is ſeldom that they are able to aſſure themſelves of any one action in particular, that it is exempt from all Self-inquiring. But though this State and Condition may be for them a great cauſe of Grief and Fear, they may be able nevertheleſs to find therein ſome Conſolation, if they dive into the Reaſons for which God permits them to remain there, and raiſes not them to a higher degree of Virtue.

XLVIII.

It is viſible in the firſt place, that the deſign which God hath to conceal the Kingdom of Heaven, which he came to eſtabliſh upon Earth, requires that Men of Honeſty and Uprightneſs be intermixt outwardly with Wicked

Wicked Men, and that they be not diſtinguiſhed from them by clear and viſible Marks. For if the Faithful, whom he animates by his Spirit, and in whom he reſides as in his Temple, were a certain kind of Men, ſeparated from others, and as a Nation apart which the World might diſtinguiſh by actions which could not be met with in others, they would all be publick, continual and ſubſiſting Miracles, which would deſtroy the ſtate of Faith, by which God will ſave the World. [redacted] who would ſee themſelves in an impoſſibility [redacted] ing them, would thereby clearly know, that Nature can not attain to the ſtate of Virtuous Men. Therefore there muſt be ſome actions purely Humane, which do ſo much reſemble ſupernatural and divine Actions, that the diſtinction cannot be perceived. And as theſe well-meaning Men do not commit any crimes, and thus cannot be thereby intermixed together with the Wicked; It muſt neceſſarily follow, that the Wicked can imitate their Virtuous Actions, and do ſome which may be ſo like outwardly, that they cannot be diſcovered from the others.

XLIX.

But it is not only an effect of God's Juſtice to withdraw from the ſight of Wicked Men the Treaſures of Grace, which he gives to the Juſt: This is one of his Mercies alſo towards the Juſt themſelves. It is good for them not to know themſelves, nor to ſee their own proper Juſtice. The ſight would be capable to overwhelm them. Man is ſo weak and feeble even in his Force, that he is not able to undergo the weight of it. And by a ſtrange Diſorder which hath its ſource in the corruption of the Heart, although its happineſs conſiſts in the poſſeſſion of Virtue, and its misfortune in being full of Faults, it is therefore more dangerous for him to know his Virtues than his Faults. The knowledge of Humility renders him Proud, and that of his pride humble. He is ſtrong and powerful when he knows himſelf weak, and weak when he thinks he is ſtrong. Thus this Obſcurity which impedes and hinders him from diſtinguiſhing clearly whether he acts by Charity,

Charity, or by Self-love, is ſo far from hurting, that 'tis comfortable to him. This Obſcurity does not take away Virtues from him, but hinders him from loſing them, by keeping him always in Humility and Fear, and making him miſtruſt all his Works, and to rely only on God's Mercy.

L.

This is the great profit of this outward reſemblance of the actions of Self-love, with thoſe of Charity. But [redacted] take notice of ſome others which are very material. It happens oftentimes that Charity is weak in certain Souls, and in this condition of weakneſs Charity would be eaſily extirpated by theſe violent Tentations, if God did not permit that theſe Tentations were not enervated, and as it were counterpois'd by certain Humane Motives, which ſtop the Violence of it, and give means to the Soul to follow the inſtinct of Grace. The fear of Mens Judgments is one of theſe Motives, and there is hardly any of them which make more impreſſion upon the Mind. Fear alone is not ſufficient for Charity to ſurmount Temptations in a Chriſtian way, ſeeing that this Fear ſprings only from Vanity, but it ſuſpends their force, and if it be found that the Soul hath ſome ſpark of true Charity, it puts her in a condition of following it; and therefore we ſee that the Holy Legiſlators of Religious Orders have not been negligent in theſe Humane Means, and that they have fixed to certain Faults, Penances, which were dreadful before Men, to the end that the Fear of this Humane Confuſion may render the Religious more diligent in avoiding them. 'Tis not that they would pretend to make them do them by this ſole Motive, but their intention hath been, that they ſhould make uſe thereof to fortifie themſelves againſt Negligence, and that this Humane Fear might ſerve as arms to Charity, the better by this means to reſiſt the Inclination of Nature.

LI.

It is not then unprofitable for Men in the ſtate of Weakneſs, wherein they are to be far removed from Vices,

Vices, not only by Charity, but alſo by this kind of Self-love which is called Civility, to the end that in the feebleneſs of Charity Civility may be able to uphold the Mind, and hinder it from falling into dangerous Exceſſes. And 'tis this which makes us ſee often ſtrange Revolutions in thoſe, who being little ſenſible of Mens Judgments, and not thinking of Pleaſing or Diſpleaſing them are ſometimes touched with ſome ſmall Motions of Piety. Becauſe when it happens that they want theſe Motions, not having then curb enough to ſtop them, they let themſelves be hurried away to all ſorts of Extravagancies. Thus when one relies upon Men, it is good to conſider if beſides Conſcience which keeps them from Evil, they have yet a certain Civility, which makes them apprehend doing things which may be condemned by wiſe and prudent Perſons, there being hardly any Spirits more dangerous, than thoſe who are capable of maintaining an Unreaſonable and Extravagant conduct againſt the Publick Judgment, and of placing themſelves without reaſon, above the reproach of thoſe who know them.

LII.

Is it not a great and conſiderable advantage to Civil Men to be able to conceal themſelves from Men, by the means of this Obſcurity which hinders one from diſcerning true Piety, from Self-love, and which makes actions of Charity paſs in the Mind of the World for the effects of pure Civility? For how dangerous would it be for them, if all their good actions were taken notice of, and that they were recompenced for them out of hand by praiſes which they would bring them? It would be the means to oblige them to ſeparate themſelves entirely from the Society of Men; whereas by the favour of this Confuſion, they have ſome more liberty to treat with the World, to follow on all occaſions the motions of their Charity, in hopes that they will be taken only as ſimple and meer Civilities. In a word, one may ſay, that as Civility is very glad to paſs for Charity,

Charity, and that it doth all it can to borrow its Form and Shape, and its Characters; Charity on the contrary is glad that it may be taken for Civility, and although it does not contribute directly to establish this Impression; yet it does nothing to destroy it, as well because it knows not absolutely that it is not something of it, as because that it is advantageous to Self-love that we believe it.

LIII.

Lastly, Is not this a Motive powerful enough to stir us up to the practice of Virtues, to say to ones self, *I should be very unfortunate to wander and stray out of the way whereto Charity and Self-Interest equally inclines me, and to render my self, in forsaking them, equally odious to God and Man.* Is not this a means to praise God, that he hath been pleased to forbid us the most part of Disorders, as contrary to the good of Men even in this Life, and ought to be avoided for the same Motive of Humane Interest? In fine, is not this a Means to understand better the strange Corruption of Nature and the Violence of our Passions, to see that they make us forget not only what we owe to God, but also what we owe to our selves, and render us Unfortunate both in this World and in the other? Because if there be less Glory and Merit in serving God, when it is for our Interest, there is without doubt, more Disorder and Confusion not to serve him, when we deprive our selves at the same time of what Interest it self causeth us to desire, and diligently to seek for, as being our own proper advantage.

The

The Third Treatiſe.

Of the ſeveral means by which God is Tempted.

I.

THere are certain Duties which all Chriſtians know to a certain degree, and which are very much unknown to them beyond this degree, which happens ordinarily, that not penetrating into the true Principles of them, they are not able to comprehend their extent. The prohibition that God hath made us of Tempting him is properly of this kind. Few Perſons are ignorant that God thereby orders us not to be idle when we have in our power Human means which we can employ. But as we know not why God forbids us to neglect theſe Human means, we reſt there, and we heed by ſo much the leſs to inſtruct our ſelves in this Precept, by how much it ſeems that there is nothing more rare than to tempt God in this manner; Human underſtanding being infinitely more inclin'd to fix it ſelf too much to Human means, through a want of Confidence in God, than to neglect them through an Exceſs of Truſt.

'Tis this which gives a belief that it would not be unprofitable to explicate at large what it is to tempt God, and to declare the Grounds and Principles of the Prohibition which God makes us thereof.

II.

God is not only Soveraignly powerful, he is also Soveraignly Wise in his Conduct. As being powerful he is the chief Original of all things, whether in the corporal and visible World, or in the invisible or Spiritual World. As being Wise he operates all things by certain means, and in a certain order, which is not less essential to his Providence than the Power it self by which he operates them.

III.

The Pride and Disorder of Men tend equally to withdraw them from the Power and Wisdom of God; as solid Piety tends to humble them more and more to the one and the other. To withdraw themselves from this Power, some have denied absolutely the Providence, and the Operation of God, even in natural things, like the *Epicureans*. Others have denied it in Spiritual things, and in the actions of our Souls, which lead lead us to Eternal Happiness or Misery, like the *Pelagians*. And others not daring to go this excess of Impiety, have not stuck to deny it him in the distinction of good Men and bad, in the Elect and Reprobate, like the *Semipelagians*.

IV.

But the manner how Men withdraw themselves from the Wisdom of God, being no less criminal, is much more unknown. And 'tis this which they call tempting of God, which is a sin few People comprehend.

It

It depends in the withdrawing themſelves from the order of God, and pretending to make it act according to our Phantaſie, in neglecting the Conſequence of the Means, to which he fixeth ordinarily the Effects of his Divine Power. And to conceive in what manner we fall thereinto, as to what regards the life of the Soul, 'tis but to conſider how we may fall thereinto, as to what regards the life of the Body.

V.

It is manifeſt, that 'tis God who maintains our being and our Life; and that he is not leſs properly the cauſe thereof, than if he made it ſubſiſt by a viſible Miracle, independent of all exterior means. We maintain it by food. But who is it that produceth this food? *It was not*, ſaith St. Auguſtin, *neither my Mother, nor my Nurſes, who repleniſhed their Breaſts for me with Milk which they gave me, but it was thee, O Lord: It was only thee, who gave me by their help the nouriſhment I had need of according to the natural Order which thou haſt eſtabliſhed, and according to the riches of thy Bounty and Providence, who diffuſeſt thy Cares even into the moſt ſecret Principles, and the moſt hidden cauſes of the ſubſiſtance of thy Creatures. Thou art the Author of all Good, O my God, and I owe thee all the Conſervation of my Life.*

VI.

Whether he make us live after this manner, or after an extraordinary and miraculous manner, 'tis always he who acts and maintains us. And thus we are obliged to acknowledge his All-powerful Hand and Operation, whether he conceal or diſcloſe it. But yet there is this difference betwixt theſe two ways, whereby he acts upon the Souls and Bodies. That the firſt is the common way by which he guides his Creatures, and the other an extraordinary way whereof he ſeldom makes uſe, and which hath no certain rules. 'Tis in the firſt that the

order of Providence, which he permits Men to know, conſiſts; and the ſecond includes only certain effects and cauſes which of our ſelves we can never foreſee, becauſe the counſels according to which God produceth them at one time, and does not produce them at another, are too ſublime for the Wit of Man.

VII.

His Wiſdom being therefore debaſed to hide ordinarily his Divine Operation by Human means, it is juſt that Men ſhould humble themſelves by theſe means, and it is a great pride in them to neglect them, and to pretend to conſtrain God to act in an extraordinary manner, of which he hath not made us capable of penetrating to the bottom. 'Tis this which is properly called tempting God, as Jeſus Chriſt teacheth us in the Goſpel. For the Devil urge in him to caſt himſelf from the top of the Temple to the bottom, in alledging to him that 'tis written; *that God hath commanded his Angels to uphold the Juſt, and to hinder them from hurting themſelves againſt the ſtones*, Jeſus Chriſt reſiſted him, telling him, that 'tis written, *Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, ſuppoſing that it would be tempting God, to pretend that he ought to cauſe his Angels to uphold a Juſt Man, who ſhould expoſe himſelf raſhly to this danger in leaving the common way which conſiſts in avoiding it.

VIII.

Aug. l. 22. contr. Fauſt. c. 36. St. *Auſtin* grounded this Maxim of Chriſtian Morality upon the Example of Jeſus Chriſt and St. *Paul*; *Holy Doctrine teacheth us*, ſaith he, *that when we are able to employ theſe Human means, 'tis to tempt God to neglect them; the Redeemer wanted not power to ſecure his Diſciples by Miracles, and yet he ordered them, that if they were perſecuted in one City, to flie to another, and he hath been willing alſo to ſhew them the*

the Example of this Conduct in his own Perſon. For altho' he was Maſter abſolutely of his Life, and that no Man could take it away without his conſent, he hath not omitted in his Infancy to flie death by flight, in cauſing his Parents to carry him into Egypt. *The Goſpel alſo obſerves, that once he would not go publickly to the Feaſt of* Eaſter, *altho' at other times he had ſpoken to the* Jews *without hiding himſelf, even when they were the moſt in wrath againſt him, and heard what he ſaid to them with more hatred, becauſe they were not able to lay hands upon him, his time not being come. 'Tis not that that time could force him to die, but 'tis becauſe he had choſen it willingly to ſuffer the* Jews *to take away his Life. Thus he hath ſhewn the power of a God, when inſtructing and reproving his enemies publickly, he did not permit their rage to have any power over him; but in flying and hiding himſelf he hath inſtructed the weakneſs of Man not to tempt God in neglecting to do what he was able to guard himſelf from the miſchiefs which he ought to avoid. The Apoſtle St.* Paul *did not deſpair of Gods Help, nor had not loſt Faith, when he cauſed himſelf to be let down in a Basket from the top of the Wall of* Damaſcus, *to free himſelf from falling into the hands of his enemies, and his flight did not denote that his Faith was void, but only that he would not tempt God, as he ſhould have done, in omitting this means of ſaving himſelf.*

IX.

'Tis yet by the ſame Principles, and by the ſame Examples that this Holy Doctor doth confute, in the Book he writ *of the Labour of Religions*, the vain imaginations of certain *African* Monks who would not labour, becauſe it is ſaid in the Goſpel, *that God doth nouriſh the fowls of the air, altho they neither ſow nor reap*, in eſtabliſhing againſt them this admirable Rule which forbids Men to tempt God, and at the ſame time teaches them not to be leſs unmindful of him, when he nouriſhes them by their labour, than if he procured them their food without contributing to it at all on their

part. *If there happen*, ſaith he, *to us infirmities and troubles, which hinder us from labouring, we ought to hope that God would feed us as he doth the Fowls in the Air, and cloth us as he clothes the Lillies, neither the Fowls nor the Lillies contributing any thing thereunto. But being in a condition to labour, we ought not to tempt God by neglecting to do it; being the power of doing it is a gift of God, ſo that in procuring by this means what is neceſſary to keep us alive; 'tis always from God we receive it, becauſe 'tis from him we receive the power of labouring for our living.*

X.

Thus it would be to tempt God to refuſe what is neceſſary to keep us alive, under pretence that God can keep us alive without the help of food. A Governor would tempt God if he ſhould not make preparation to to defend the place he hath Command of, againſt the Enemy; under pretence that it is written; *If God defend not the City, the Guard watcheth in vain.* For altho he can conſerve it in effect, as he did *Jeruſalem* againſt the Army of *Sennacherib*; yet the ordinary way whereby he ſaved the Cities, was to inſpire the Captains with vigilance, and the Souldiers with courage. And generally it may be ſaid, that all dull and lazy People in ſome ſort tempt God; becauſe they neglect the means by which Gods Grace and Aſſiſtance is obtained.

XI.

Nor is there any but God who knows all the Reaſons why he conceals his Operations under certain Cauſes, which appear all Natural. We know only ſome of them. By this means he withdraws Men from idleneſs, he obliges them to vigilance and labour, he employs and exerciſes them, he puniſhes them by theſe painful and laborious employments, he makes them ſet a great value on thoſe things which coſt them moſt pains. But

it

it may be ſaid that one of his principal deſigns, is, to hide himſelf, and to make his conduct unknown to thoſe who are unworthy to know it.

XII.

If he did always act after a miraculous manner, we ſhould be as it were forced to acknowledge him in every thing, and this evidence would not be conform neither to his Juſtice nor Mercy: He is by his Juſtice to ſuffer the wicked to continue in the dark, which inclines and makes them doubt of his Providence, and of his Being, and he is by his Mercy to keep his Choſen privately from vanity by this wholeſome obſcurity.

The life of Faith which is the life of the Juſt in this World, conſiſting then in ſerving God without ſeeing him in a ſenſible manner, it is evident that continual Miracles would deſtroy this ſtate abſolutely.

Thus it is neceſſary that God act on one part, and on the other that we do not know his action ſenſibly, he muſt hide himſelf under a certain means, which would appear as it were natural; and which being always expoſed to view, ſhould not ſtir up their admiration, that it might only be diſcovered by thoſe whoſe Eyes he ſhould open by a Light which he gives to whom he ſhall think fit.

XIII.

But if it were neceſſary that God ſhould conceal himſelf in this manner in the Order of Nature, and in the outward effects he produceth on the Body, it were not leſs neceſſary that he ſhould conceal himſelf in his inward Operations upon the Soul; becauſe the evidence of the Divine Operation in theſe kind of actions, withdraws not the Soul leſs from the ſtate of Faith, by which he deſires that ſhe ſhould work out her Salvation in this life. And therefore he gives not ordinarily his greateſt Graces, but by a conſequent of means which

appear quite Human and ordinary, and which seem Humanly proportioned to the end for which they are ordained.

He wills us to desire Vertues, to labour to acquire them, to seek out means to practise them, to separate our selves from things which may carry us to sin. 'Tis he who breathes these desires into us, who operates in us these labours and pains, and who makes us lop off these impediments. It would be facile for him to give us Vertue without this consequent means, but in giving them us in this order, and by these means he hides himself from us, and conserves us in humility.

XIV.

In the same manner he might advertise us every moment what we have to do; but if he did in this manner, it would be a Conduct visibly miraculous. He wills us then that we foresee our actions and our words, that we consider them before him, that we may govern them according to his Laws; and that we may employ all the care we possibly can to acknowledge what he wills us, and requires of us in each rencounter. He himself is the Author of these preparations, of this Enquiry, of this Care; and he makes use of them, as an ordinary means to communicate to us the Wisdom which we have need of for our Conduct.

XV.

'Tis true that Jesus Christ said to his Disciples, that they ought not to be troubled for what they shall say to Kings and Princes when they shall force them to appear before them, because it shall be given to them even at the hour it self what they ought to answer them. But Jesus Christ's design in this admonition was only to exclude the foreseeings and reflexions of Despair and Self-love: And he would rather dispose them not to be astonished, when they are obliged to speak to Kings, being

being unprepared, than to forbid them to prepare themſelves for it. Likewiſe when Jeſus Chriſt forbad his Diſciples to be troubled at the want of Food and Cloaths, he did not forbid them according to the Fathers, reaſonable care and precautions, nor obliged them to expect that God ſhould procure them the one and the other by extraordinary ways; he only commanded them to baniſh inquietudes and diſturſts from their Hearts, which are hurtful to his Providence, and to his Bounty and Goodneſs, which hinder them from ſeeking the Kingdom of God before all other things.

XVI.

Thus there be often apparent contrarieties in Chriſtian Truths, when we only look upon them with a ſuperficial ſight which diſappears and vaniſheth, when penetrated to the bottom.

We may believe, for example, to follow only the firſt Light which ſprings from an imperfect knowledge of Truth, that Chriſtian Life being a Supernatural Life, and which is above all Human ſtrength, we ought not rather to chooſe one kind of life more than another, nor to trouble our ſelves to avoid the occaſions of ſinning. We can do all with God, one will ſay, but we can do nothing without his help. Thus with the aid and help of God I can continue immoveable in the moſt dangerous occaſions, and without this aid I cannot uphold my ſelf in the moſt ſure retreats.

But thoſe who ſpeak in this manner, comprehend not the ſecret of the Conduct of Grace. 'Tis true, God is able to boye us up in the greateſt perils; and he does it ſometimes when 'tis he himſelf who ingages us therein; but 'tis but ſeldom that he gives his Grace in ſo conſpicuous a manner. Thus to make us reſiſt temptations, he inſpires into us the care and means to avoid them. This is the ordinary way, and whoever neglects it hath no right to pretend that God upholds him after another manner.

XVII.

XVII.

If one were ordinarily as recollected in business, as in quiet and repose; If one sunk down oftentimes no more in temptations living in the occasions of sin, than in the way of avoiding them; If one contracted no more spots in trading with the World, than by living a retired life; If great Employments swayed us not more to vanity, than mean and base Employments; it would undoubtedly be a kind of visible Miracle, God acteth in this sort when he pleaseth, for some chosen Souls. But as he will not that his Conduct over us, appear so visibly miraculous, he does it not very often, and he obliges us thereby to reduce our selves to the ordinary way, and to prefer, as much as we can, repose before action, a retired life before great Employs; And lastly, the flying all occasions, before a confidence which leads us to expose our selves thereto. Not that it is not as facile for God to save as well in one manner as another, but he hath taught us, that ordinarily he saves us in the second manner, because he is there more private and less known; and by that means he obligeth us to reduce our selves thereunto.

XVIII.

'Tis upon this method of Grace, and this consequence of means under which God hides his Supernatural Operations, that all the Rules, and all the Spiritual Counsels are grounded, which the Saints inspir'd by God, have given to those whom they have conducted in these means.

These great Saints are not ignorant that 'tis from him all Virtues must be expected, and that he is the cause of all the good actions Christians perform. They were perswaded that he is the Master of Mens Hearts, and that he operates in them what he will by an invincible and an All-powerful force. Nevertheless they

they prescribe Rules and Practices, as Philosophers might do, who would pretend to obtain Virtue by their own proper force. They will have us to keep our minds always busied about holy thoughts; that we apply our selves without intermission to the reading, and to the studying the Word of God; that we live as it were separate from the World; that we reduce our Bodies into bondage by labour and mortification; that we avoid all that may weaken us, or be an occasion of our fall; that we make a continual tryal upon our selves to resist our passions; that we lead a life uniform, orderly, and not idle, passing by an infinite number of actions prescribed us, as more conform to our condition and to our duty. 'Tis not that they did not know perfectly, that God is able to bestow on us his greatest Graces without making us pass through these exercises, but they knew at the same time that the common order of his Providence is, not to grant us them, but pursuant to these exercises, and by these exercises themselves; and thus he grants in the first place to Souls the Grace to practise them, to make them afterwards to arrive to the Vertues whereunto he desires to raise them, being the Author as well of the Actions which he makes them perform to acquire these Vertues, as of Vertues which they acquire by these Actions.

XIX.

Nor is there any thing more easie to God than to make us know from time to time our faults, by the infusion of a Light which will place them at once before our Eyes. He might likewise correct us for them in giving us contrary Vertues, without our being obliged to be troubled continually at the sight of our Miseries. But the Saints who know the ways which God makes use of generally to cleanse Souls, forget not to recommend to us this diligent examination and care of our Souls, as one of the chief Duties of Piety, which ought

ought not to end but with our life. *Brethren*, ſaith St. *Auguſtine*, *in expecting the coming of this happy day, wherein we ſhall be joyned with the Angels of Heaven, to Praiſe God for all Eternity; In expecting till we be arrived at this ineffable joy which we hope for, let us apply our ſelves as much as we can to the Practice of good Works; let us daily examin our Conſciences, and carefully look that there be nothing broken and torn in the Spiritual Robes of our Souls, that we have not received ſome ſpots through Intemperance, that we have not burnt them through Choler, nor divided them through Envy, that we have not tarniſhed their Luſtre through Avarice. Let us make haſte to Cure theſe Wounds of our Souls, whilſt we have yet the Power with the aid of Grace.*

Hom. 15.

XX.

The great St. *Gregory*, whom God hath given particularly to his Church, to inſtruct her with Rules of a ſpiritual life, recommends nothing ſo much in his Morals as this Vigilance and Care of our ſelves, and this diligent examination of good and bad actions. *We muſt*, ſaith he, *purifie the Actions even of Vertue, by an exact diſcuſſion, for fear of taking bad for good, and what is imperfect and defective for very perfect. 'Tis that which is hinted to us by the Sacrifice which* Job *offered for each of his Children. For 'tis Offering a Sacrifice to God for each of his Children to Offer him Prayers for each Act of Vertue; for fear that Wiſdom ſhould puff him up, that Intelligence ſhould make him ſtray, that Prudence ſhould puzzle and confound him, that Force ſhould make him preſumptuous. And becauſe* Holocauſt *is a Sacrifice which is abſolutely conſumed, 'tis neceſſary that our Soul be burnt by the fire of Compunction, and that ſhe conſume in this fire all that ſhe hath of impure in her thoughts. But no Man is able to do it, if he be not careful to examin all his inward*

Greg. Mor. l. 1. c. 17 and 18.

ward motions, before he proceed to Actions. This Saint saith yet, *We muſt bruiſe Perfumes, that is to ſay, conſider apart all that paſſeth in the Soul,* Ibid. c. 19. *and reduce it as it were into duſt by this examination. We muſt take off the skin of the Victim, and cut it into bits, that is to ſay, we muſt take from our Actions this outward Surface, which makes them appear to us virtuous, that we may ſee even to the bottom of them.*

This inſtruction is often repeated in St. *Gregories* Works, that one may ſay 'tis the princip[illegible] of his ſpiritual Conduct, and far from exempting the Juſt more advanced in this Practice, he on the contrary placeth their advancement in the increaſing this Care and Vigilance, and in this attention upon themſelves.

XXI.

St. *Bernard* hath writ four Books to bring Souls to this exerciſe of examining their Actions and Conduct before God; and he makes it the chief Duty of a Chriſtian life; but to ſhew in a word the Idea he had of true Piety, he ſays, *That 'tis to apply ones ſelf to conſider what one is. Quid eſt Pietas? Vacare Conſiderationi*; and that this Conſideration conſiſts in foreſeeing ones actions to regulate them before God, to correct ones faults, and to think what is ones Duty. And 'tis remarkable that this Saint gives not theſe inſtructions to a Novice, but to a great Pope, whom he ought to imagin in a ſtate of Perfection, having been raiſed to this firſt dignity of the Church for his eminent Virtues.

XXII.

When the Philoſophers, who ſuppoſed that Virtue hath no other Source but Nature, preſcribed Rules to attain it, they preſcribed no other than theſe above. They recommended to us, like theſe Saints, this examination, and this continual care and vigilance over our actions, as may be ſeen in the Verſes attributed to *Pythagoras*,

thagoras, and in ſeveral places of *Seneca*. Did not St. *Auguſtine*, St. *Gregory*, and St. *Bernard* know that Vertue is a pure effect of the mercy of God, and not of our endeavours and reflections? Doubtleſs they knew it, ſeeing they taught it in ſo many places of their Books; but likewiſe they knew that God did not give it ordinarily to Men, but by the practice of certain means and exerciſes, to which he applies them by his Grace. And thus the principal care of thoſe who [illegible]rge of Souls is to put them in the way of practiſing theſe means, by which they may obtain God's Grace, and that it is tempting him to act otherways, and to deſire that he may grant us them by ſome other way than that which his Wiſdom hath choſen, and which he hath given us to underſtand by the example of all the Saints.

XXIII.

Wherefore do Men believe that the Fathers have teſtified ſo much doubt of thoſe who do not think of being converted, except at the hour of death? Is it becauſe 'tis not as eaſie for God to touch ſinners by his Grace at the laſt moment as at another time; or that that of death is excluded from the general Promiſe, which God hath made to Men to receive them into his Grace if they be Converted ſincerely? Without doubt 'tis nothing of that, God is alway equally powerful, and the boſom of his Mercy is always equally open to Converted Sinners. But 'tis becauſe the Fathers have thought that theſe Converſions were not generally ſpeaking ſincere, and that they were rather an effect of the ſtate wherein they found themſelves, than an alteration of the Heart. And the reaſon of it is, that in the common way the Heart doth not change thus all at once the Object and the End. Outward Actions may be changed eaſily in an inſtant; but Love which holds the principal place of the Heart ſcarcely changes in an inſtant.

inſtant. It muſt, ordinarily ſpeaking, be diſcouraged by little and little, and that there be another to take its place by divers progreſſes. 'Tis thus that Human paſſions are changed, and God who wills that the Operations of his Grace be not ſenſibly diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of Nature, follows commonly the ſame method. He begins to ſhake the Heart through fear, before he touch it with his love, and he often touches it a long time by the beginnings of Love, before he makes himſelf maſter of it by a ruling Love, which turns the Heart towards him as towards its laſt end, and which frees and delivers it from the bondage of the love of Creatures. Thus as the Converſion of dying ſinners cannot paſs through theſe degrees, it muſt be miraculous to be true. The Church deſpairs not of this Miracle, which is the reaſon why ſhe grants the Sacraments to dying People: But ſhe fears mightily that theſe Sentiments which appear in Sinners in this ſtate, are only thoſe light beginnings either of the Fear or of the Love of God, which are not ſufficient for a true and hearty Converſion. And 'tis this which obliges ſinners not only to labour, but alſo to make haſte to labour ſeriouſly for their Salvation; that their love may have time to increaſe, and to arrive unto a condition that one may be able to ſay they are truly Converted. To act otherways is to tempt God, nay, and to tempt him after a moſt dangerous manner, in willing him to do a Miracle in the Order of his Grace, to ſave us. And in this faſhion all thoſe who expect to be Converted to God at their death, beſides their other ſins, do yet commit that of tempting God, which often cauſes the very utmoſt of it.

XXIV.

Spiritual Riches are all gratis as from God, and yet it is written; That the hands of thoſe who labour ſtrongly heap up Riches. *Manus fortium divitias parat.* And the Scripture attributes on the contrary Spiritual poverty to the want of this Labour. *Egeſtatem operatus*

eſt

est manus remissa, that is to say, that negligence and sloth cause the poverty, and the misery of Souls; so great a care hath God to hide the works of his Grace under the resemblance of those of Nature.

XXV.

Prayer is doubtless that of all Christian actions wherein the need of Grace appears most. Therefore the Spirit of God is called by a particular Title, the Spirit of Prayers, *Spiritus Precum*. And it is said of him, that he prays by unspeakable sighs. It would seem then, that this so Divine Exercise should need neither preparation nor rules, and that it had nothing to do, but to expect the Inspiration of Grace. And yet the Wise Man advises us expressly, that we must prepare the Soul before Prayer, for fear of being like those who tempt God; *Ante Orationem prepara Animam tuam, & noli esse quasi homo, qui tentat Deum*: Shewing thus, that all those who pray being unprepared, fall into the sin of tempting God, and that one of the principal causes of the Lukewarmness in our Prayers, is the little care we have to prepare our selves thereunto, by the means prescribed to us by Scripture, which consists in withdrawing our Hearts and Minds from wandring and vain amusements, that we may find them again when they must be presented to God in Prayer, being impossible that the Heart doth not run after its Treasure, and busie it self with the Objects it possesseth.

XXVI.

'Tis thus that truth unites what appears contrary to those who know it but imperfectly. All depends on God, therefore we must labour, say certain Hereticks, we must not labour. Therefore Virtue depends not on Grace, say the *Pelagians*. But the Catholick Doctrine consists in uniting these Truths, and casting away the false Conclusions. We must labour saith this Doctrine, and

and yet all depends on God. Labour is an effect of Grace, and the ordinary means to obtain Grace, to think that Labour and Virtues are not the Gifts of God, is a *Pelagian* presumption. To slight the means God makes use of generally to communicate his Grace to Men, is to tempt God in subverting the order of his Wisdom. Thus Piety consists in practising these means, and acknowledging that 'tis God who makes us practise them.

XXVII.

I know well that Humane Understanding, which is dazled by the splendidness of Divine Truths, and which is puzled with its vain Reasonings, may yet find difficulty in this alliance of Labour and Grace, and in supposing with St. *Austin* and St. *Thomas*, that what power one may have to do acts of Piety by other Graces, they are never done effectually, unless God determine the Will by efficacious Grace. He is easily inclined to conclude, that we need only continue in repose, until we perceive these efficacious motions, which make us practise them; that when we shall perceive them we shall not fail to labour, being that Grace will apply us thereto by a Virtue all powerful, and not having them, it is certain, that we shall practice them only in an unprofitable manner.

'Tis an Objection which comes easily into the Minds of those who follow their own reasoning in these matters, which regard the Conduct of God upon Souls. The Fathers, who were not ignorant thereof, have answered thereto in divers solid ways, by shewing after what manner it may be truly said, that it is always in Man's Power to satisfie the Duties of Christian Piety, and that 'tis their Fault if they do not accomplish them.

XXVIII.

But as it is not convenient to answer thereunto in a Theological way, it is enough to shew that it hath nothing of Solidity, even according to Humane Reason, and that the Necessity we have of efficacious Grace to Practice Christian Virtues, may well serve to humble Men, and to keep them in a state of Fear and Trembling; but that it can never justly carry them neither to Idleness, to Trouble, nor Despair; because we have always by Nature it self a Means which sufficeth to keep our Minds in quiet, and to banish away Trouble and Inquietude. The Reason is, that although to labour according to God, to resist our Faults like Christians, to Pray, and to practice good Works by the Spirit of true Charity, we have need of Efficacious and Supernatural Grace. It is nevertheless certain, that each of these actions in particular may be done sometimes without Grace, by a motive of Self-love and Humane Respect, and by a Fear purely servile. Now, though there be an infinite difference betwixt Self-love and the Love of God; nevertheless, the Motives and the Actions which spring from these two Principles so different are sometimes so like, and we have so little light to penetrate to the bottom of our Hearts, that we do not distinguish with certainty by what Principle we act, and whether through Covetousness or through Charity. We may well say with St. *Paul*, That we do not think our selves guilty of any thing, but we ought to joyn with him, that for all that we are not Justified, and that we cannot Judge our selves, because we do not know our selves perfectly.

We have therefore always a Principle in us to accomplish what there is of outward shew in these exercises of a Christian Life. And as we are not able to know certainly when we have efficacious Grace, except it be by a Humane Principle that we act, likewise we cannot always know when we act by a Principle of Humane

mane Interest, Grace not being the Principle of our Action. We may take Charity for Self-love, and Self-love for Charity, and in this Obscurity Reason obliges us to take a resolution to do always what is Commanded, leaving to God the determination of the Principle which makes us act.

'Tis not that our endeavour to purifie our selves is not requisite, as much as is possible from all Self-love, and from all Interest; but this desire does not assure us that we are exempt. For one may desire through Self-love to be freed from Self-love; as one may wish for Humility through Pride. It makes it self an infinite Circle of reflections upon reflections on those actions of the Soul, and there is always in us a certain Bottom and Root which remains unknown to us our whole Life time.

'Tis the State wherein God wills that Men live in this World. We are condemned to these Obscurities by his Justice, and his Mercy renders them advantageous to us, when it causeth us to make use of it to become more humble. And thus it is manifest, that these Obscurities being unavoidable on the one part, and on the other useful, what we have to do, is to rest in quiet, and to adore in Peace the Goodness of God who ordains them for our good, and to act nevertheless the most sincerely, and the most disinterestedly that possibly we can, which is prescrib'd us by his Laws, in expecting the Judgment he will lay upon us in the other Life in making us know the bottom of our Hearts, which we shall never know clearly in this.

The which sufficeth at least to procure us a Humane Peace, which is not easily distinguished from the Peace of God, and which is always worth more than trouble which overwhelms the Soul, and reduceth her to Idleness and Despair.

XXIX.

This reason ought to make us prefer the Practice of all the Exercises of a Christian Life, before a Soft,

Negligent, and ſlothful Life, becauſe it is certain, that thoſe who do not practice them are in a wrong way, and that few of thoſe who paſs their lives in diſorder will be ſaved, ſeeing that it cannot be, unleſs God Convert them by an extraordinary Mercy, which is very rare in the order of Grace it ſelf.

On the contrary thoſe who practice theſe Holy Exercises, are all in ſome ſort in the way of Peace, they are in the Company of thoſe who go to Heaven, and have alſo this comfort, That there are very few of thoſe who ſhall practice them a long time, who arrive not at happineſs; Perſeverance in an orderly Life, being the moſt certain mark of Charity, becauſe Cupidity is Wavering of it ſelf, and continues not long in the purſuance of one and the ſame deſign.

XXX.

Thus the Knowledge of the need and want of efficacious Grace, to act like a Chriſtian, doth indeed never puzzle thoſe who hearken to and follow Reaſon; becauſe they always ſee their way. They know they muſt pray to God without intermiſſion, mortify continually their Paſſions, always keep a Guard upon themſelves, ſtrive even to Death for Victory, never to be tired with practiſing good Works- and to be ruled in all Things. They know that the Incertainty wherein they are, whether it be Grace or Self-love which moves them to act, ought never to hinder them from acting. *Perform, perform theſe things,* ſaith St. *Auguſtin, through fear of Puniſhment, if ye cannot do them for the love of Juſtice,* that is to ſay, for Charity. They ought then to practice them always: 'Tis what is Certain and Indubitable, and in practiſing them they ought not to judge, that they act only by Covetouſneſs and Intereſt, ſeeing that there Hearts are unknown to them, and that they ought not to judge raſhly of themſelves, no more than of others.

Aug. Ser. 13. de Verb. Ap.

XXXI. In

XXXI.

In a word, we muſt Pray, Labour, and live in quiet even to Death, in abandoning our ſelves to God, and ſaying to him with the Prophet, *In manibus tuis Sortes meæ. My Lot is in thy hands*, both for this Life and the Life to come, for the Preſent, and for Eternity. Marching in this ſort in the ways of God with a perſevering Fidelity, if we never have abſolutely a certainty that the Holy Ghoſt dwells in us, and that 'tis he who cauſeth us to act, we ſhall not forbear nevertheleſs to have thereof a juſt Confidence, and this Confidence encreaſing more and more, according as we ſhall advance in Virtue, will only leave us ſo much Fear as is neceſſary to reſiſt the Tentation of Preſumption and Pride.

XXXII.

There are yet many other ways of tempting God, beſides thoſe we have ſet down. For as this Sin conſiſts in withdrawing our ſelves from the Wiſdom of God, and in obliging us to act contrary to the ordinary Rules of his Prudence, whether in the order of Nature, or in that of Grace, we may tempt God in as many faſhions, as we can diſpenſe with theſe Rules, in hopes that God will act towards us in an extraordinary manner.

For Example, 'tis tempting God to engage our ſelves in Charges of the Church, without meet and convenient Vocation, flattering our ſelves with the hopes that God will rectifie our entrance, and will not forbear to grant us the neceſſary Graces to acquit our ſelves of the Charge which we have raſhly undertaken. Becauſe the ordinary way to obtain neceſſary Graces for this employ, is to enter thereupon by the Door of Holy Vocation; and if God repair this Fault in ſome in making them enter again as it were anew, into

the Charge which they have Usurped; 'tis an extraordinary favour, which no Man can promise himself without Rashness and Tempting God.

XXXIII.

It is the very same with all other engagements in the several Condition of this Life. We tempt God when we enter into them without a reasonable Assurance, That we have necessary Dispositions to acquit our selves of the Obligations which are belonging to them. A Man who enters into Office tempts God, if he do not perceive in himself a Force able to resist Injustice, according as the Scripture saith, *Noli quærere fieri Judex, nisi valeas perrumpere Iniquitates.* Those who engage themselves in Marriage tempt God, unless they be disposed to satisfie the Obligations of that State, and have strength enough to suffer all that must be born withall therein, and to bear up against the Temptations which are either from this state in General, or from the Particular choice which they make of the Party they marry. They who embrace a Religious Life tempt God, if they have not fit qualities to persevere in that Holy Vocation, and to undergo Pains and Labour. And therefore, those who exclude such as have not these Qualities, far from doing them an Injury, do them, on the contrary, the greatest Charity which could be done them; being they hinder them from contracting an Engagement, the Consequences whereof could not be prosperous to them. Lastly, What Enterprize Men form to themselves; what design of Life Men undertake; what State and Condition Men embrace, they must always, according to the Gospel, compute the Charges, that is to say, examine what strength God hath given them, and what willingness, to Judge thereby if they be not too Fool-hardy in engaging themselves therein.

XXXIV. If

XXXIV.

If we do but reflect on Mens Conduct in the choice of the Employment and State wherein they paſs their Lives, we ſhall find that there is not only nothing more common than this manner of tempting God, but that 'tis the moſt ordinary Source of Confuſion which Reigns in all States and Conditions. For it is clear, that we do not chuſe them through the Conſideration of the Relation, and the Proportion they have with the Diſpoſitions which God hath put in us, but through certain Laws of Opinion which Mens Vanity hath eſtabliſhed in the World; according to which we believe, that being of ſuch and ſuch a Birth, and that having a certain quantity of Goods, we cannot but embrace ſuch kind of Lives, and that all others are againſt our Intereſt. In this manner there are ſome who think that there is no other way to be taken for them than that of the Sword, or an Eccleſiaſtical Profeſſion: Others are of Opinion, that they cannot live in the World, except they be Magiſtrates. This Daughter muſt be Religious, becauſe in the condition ſhe is ſhe cannot be Married. Thus we reduce our ſelves to a ſtraight by theſe Chymerical Laws; and as God follows them not in the Diſtribution of his Talents and Graces, it happens from thence that we ſtrictly forbid, through fancy, all Employments which God permits us, and are very remiſs in performing thoſe he commands us. We engage our ſelves therein therefore raſhly, and likewiſe continue therein; we tempt God continually by the Exerciſe of theſe ill choſen Employments, and inſtead of getting his Favour and Aſſiſtance, we get, without Intermiſſion, the Effects of his Wrath, and the loſs of his Friendſhip. One may eaſily imagine what muſt be the Conſequences of this Conduct.

XXXV.

We muſt obſerve yet upon this Subject, that although Men in this Life be always in a continual want of Grace,

they are not nevertheleſs in an equal degree of Weakneſs and Strength, and that the different Meaſure wherewith God diſtributes his Grace to them, makes according to the Language of the Fathers and Holy Scripture, that we may ſay there are Works and Employments proportionable to the Grace of certain Souls, but which are not ſo to others. There are ſome who would loſe themſelves in ſtriving to imitate certain Actions of Saints, becauſe they want the Power and Force to undergo them like theſe Saints. It is requiſite then that each know what he has received from God, and if he is not able to judge thereof by himſelf, let him judge thereof at leaſt by the light of Underſtanding Perſons. Otherwiſe in advancing himſelf beyond the Gifts God hath given him, he tempts him, and is in danger of committing many great Faults by thoſe raſh advances.

XXXVI.

God having been willing to conjoyn Men together by theſe reciprocal Endeavours or Duties of Charity, to render them dependant one of another, as well in reſpect of a Spiritual as a Temporal Life, and communicating to them for that purpoſe more ordinarily the Light they have need of for their Guide, by the means of Paſtors and Spiritual Perſons, which they may conſult as well as by himſelf, from thence it follows, that 'tis alſo to tempt God in ſome ſort not to ſubmit to the order, in refuſing any ones Counſel, and following only in the conduct of their Life, their own proper Thoughts and Reaſons; becauſe this is to oblige God to communicate his Light to us in an extraordinary manner.

XXXVII.

It may be ſaid alſo, that every Mortal Sin which we commit, in hopes to be abſolved thereof by Penance, is one way of tempting God. For the Ordinary way of Salvation, whether for thoſe who as yet have not loſt

loſt the innocence of Baptiſm, or for thoſe who have repaired it by Penance, is to conſerve the Grace they have received, and to labour to augment and encreaſe it every day by the Exerciſe of Chriſtian Virtues. To pretend then that God will make us re-enter into the Way of Salvation, although we loſt it by grievous Crimes, is to withdraw our ſelves from his ordinary Conduct, and to force him to do, in the order of his Grace, Miracles in our behalf.

XXXVIII.

Laſtly, even juſt Men, and Perſons living orderly tempt God in many ways, and often when they are not aware of it. For the Goſpel tells us, that the means to obtain Grace requiſite for us, whether to acquit our ſelves of our Obligations, or to enter ſafely into the leaſt Engagements, and form the leaſt Deſign, is to conſult God upon all occaſions, and to pray to him continually; every time they neglect to practice this means, and engage themſelves in ſmall and trivial Enterpriſes, in Viſits, in Converſations, in Works of Piety, without applying themſelves to God, without looking towards him, without adviſing with him, without Praying to him, in ſome ſort it may be ſaid, that they Tempt God. And as all the Faults which we commit in our Life-time happens through a Neglect of practiſing the Means to avoid them, it is evident that Men ſin not, but becauſe they Tempt God, and thus this Sin which they think on ſo rarely, and which they dream ſo little of, is the Cauſe of all Juſt Mens fallings, and the Loſs of all thoſe who periſh.

The

The Fourth Treatiſe.

Of Plays.

I.

IT hath ſcarcely been known but in this Age, that Men have undertaken to juſtifie Plays, and to make them paſs as Recreations which might be joyn'd with Devotion. Former Ages were more ſimple and ſincere in Good and Bad. Thoſe who made profeſſion of Piety, did witneſs by their Actions and Words, the Horror they had for thoſe Profane Sights. Thoſe who were poſſeſſed with paſſion for a Theatre, acknowledged at leaſt, that they did not follow in that the Rules of Chriſtian Religion. But in this Age there are found thoſe who have pretended in this point to be able to conjoyn Piety, and the Spirit of the World together. They are not content to follow Vice, they will have it honoured, and that it be not Withered and Decayed by the ſhameful Name of Vice, which always troubles a little the Pleaſure which they take therein, by the Horror which accompanies it. They have therefore endeavoured to act in ſome ſort, that Conſcience might be accommodated with Paſſion, and not to come and trouble it by its importunate Remorſes. And this is it they have taken ſo much pains about, upon

upon the Subject of Plays. For as there is hardly any Recreation more agreeable to Worldly People than that, ſo it was very important for them to aſſure themſelves thereby of a ſweet and quiet Enjoying of it, to the end that nothing ſhould be wanting to compleat their Satisfaction. The means which thoſe undertook who were the cunningeſt, was to form to themſelves a certain Metaphyſical Idea of Comedies, and to purifie this Idea from all kind of Sin. Plays, ſay they, are a Repreſentation of Actions and Words, as it were preſent. What harm therein I pray? And after having juſtified in this ſort the general Idea of Plays; they think that they have proved that there is no Sin in them, and in concluſion they go to them without any Scruple. But the way to free themſelves of this Illuſion, is to conſider on the contrary, Plays not in a Chymerical Speculation, but in the common and ordinary Practice, whereof we are Witneſſes. We muſt take notice what is the Life of Actors and Players, what is the Subſtance and End of Plays, what Effects they generally produce in the Minds of thoſe who repreſent them, or who ſee them acted or repreſented; what impreſſions they leave in them, and afterwards to examine if all that have any relation to the Life, Sentiments, and the Duties of a true Chriſtian. This is it that's deſign'd to be done in this Treatiſe. But as the generality of Reaſons Men make uſe of, tend naturally to the reading of Romances, they may be eaſily comprehended therein, when they are not expreſly mention'd in this.

II.

'Tis impoſſible to conſider the Trade of Players and Actors, and to compare them with Chriſtian Profeſſion, but we muſt acknowledge that there is nothing more unworthy a Child of God, and Member of Jeſus Chriſt than this ſort of Employment. We do not ſpeak only of the groſs Abuſes, and the diſſolute manner Women

Women appear upon the Stage, becauſe the Upholders of Plays, ſeparate always theſe ſort of Diſorders by Imagination, although never effectively. We ſpeak only of what is entirely and abſolutely inſeparable. 'Tis a Recreation which tends to the Divertiſement of others, where Men and Women repreſent Paſſions of Hatred and Choler, Ambition, Revenge, and chiefly of Love. They muſt expreſs them the moſt Naturally and the Livelieſt that poſſibly they can, and they cannot do it unleſs they ſtir up in ſome ſort theſe Paſſions in themſelves, and that they be imprinted in their Souls, that they may expreſs them outwardly by Actions and Words. Thoſe then who expreſs a Paſſion of Love, muſt be touched in ſome manner with that Paſſion whilſt they act it, and they cannot think that this Impreſſion which they have excited ſo willingly, can be forgotten ſuddenly, and that it ſhould not leave in them a great inclination for this ſame Paſſion, which they were willing to reſent. Thus Plays are by their Nature the Schools and Exerciſes of Vice, being that they excite in us neceſſarily vicious Paſſions. What if we conſider, that the whole Life of Players is employed in this Exerciſe; that they paſs it abſolutely to learn in particular, or to repeat amongſt themſelves, or to act before the Spectators the Image of ſome Vice; that they have nothing almoſt in their Minds but theſe Follies: It will be eaſie to ſee, that 'tis impoſſible to accord this Trade or Calling. with the Purity of our Religion. And thus it muſt be allowed to be an Employ profane, and unbecoming a Chriſtian; that thoſe who follow it are obliged to leave it, as all the Councils do command: and that conſequently 'tis not permitted to others to contribute to entertain them in a Profeſſion contrary to Chriſtianity, nor to authoriſe it by their Preſence.

III. As

III.

As the paſſion of Love is the ſtrongeſt impreſſion which Sin hath made upon our Souls, which appears clearly enough by the horrible diſorders it produceth in the World, ſo there is nothing more dangerous than to excite it, to nouriſh it, and to deſtroy what reſtrains and ſtops its courſe. Now that which helps moſt thereto is a certain horror, which [illegible] and good Education imprints therein; and [illegible] this horrour more than Plays, becauſe this Paſſion appears there with Honour, and in a manner, which inſtead of rendring it horrible, is capable on the contrary to cauſe it to be loved. It appears there without ſhame or infamy. There they boaſt of being touched with it. Thus the Mind is enſnared by little and little. They learn how to ſuffer it, and how to ſpeak of it; and the Soul afterwards is eaſily caught with it in following the propenſity of Nature.

IV.

'Tis needleſs to ſay in juſtification of Plays and Romances, that therein is only repreſented lawful Paſſions, and which have Marriage as the end they aim at. For though Marriage may make good uſe of Concupiſcence, 'tis nevertheleſs in it ſelf always ill, and it is not lawful to excite it, neither in our ſelves nor in others. We ought always to look upon it as the ſhameful effect of Sin, as a ſource of Poiſon able to infect us every moment, if God ſtop not the bad cauſes of it. Thus from ſome apparent honeſty, wherewith Plays and Romances endeavour to cloath it, we cannot deny but even in that, they are contrary to good manners, being that they imprint an agreeable Idea of a vicious Paſſion, and that they make of it an Heroick quality, there being none which appears with more ſplendor, than that in theſe Heroes of the Plays.

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V.

Marriage checks Concupiſcence, but makes it not orderly. It reſtrains always ſomething of diſorder which is proper to it, and it is not but by force that it keeps it ſelf within the limits which Reaſon preſcribes it. Now exciting this Paſſion by Plays, we do not imprint at the ſame time the love of that which governs it. The Beholders receive only the impreſſion of the Paſſion, and little or none of the moderation of it. The Author ſtops where he pleaſes this Paſſion repreſented by a Stroke of his Pen; but he doth not ſtop it ſo in thoſe in whom he excites it. The repreſentation of a legitimate Love, and of that which is not ſo, cauſes almoſt the ſame effect, and excites only the ſame motion which acts afterwards differently, according to the different diſpoſitions which it meets with; and often alſo the Repreſentation of a private Paſſion, with this Vail of Honour, is moſt dangerous, becauſe the Mind looks upon it with leſs precaution, as it is received there with leſs horror, and becauſe the Heart is carried thereunto with leſs reſiſtance.

VI.

That which renders Plays more dangerous, is becauſe they diſperſe all the remedies, which are able to hinder the bad impreſſion they make. The Heart is ſoften'd by the pleaſure of them. The Mind thereby is altogether buſied with outward Objects, and abſolutely beſotted with the Follies which are there repreſented, and conſequently not in a condition of Chriſtian vigilance, neceſſary to reſiſt temptations, and like a Reed bent by all ſorts of Winds. There is great likelihood that no Body hath ever thought of preparing themſelves againſt them by Prayer, ſeeing that the Spirit of God would much rather incline to avoid this dange-

rous

rous ſort of Divertiſement, than to beſeech his Grace to be preſerved from the corruption, which there it met withall. If then Perſons who live in ſolitude, and in retirement from the World, do yet find great difficulty in a Chriſtian Life, even in Monaſteries. If they receive tryals of Worldly Commerce at the ſame time, when 'tis Charity and Neceſſity that engages them therein, and that they keep themſelves upon their guards as much as they can, that they may reſiſt: What may be the Wounds, and downfall of thoſe, who leading a Life abſolutely Senſual, expoſe themſelves to temptations, which the ſtrongeſt are not able to undergo? Ought it not to be ſaid of them, comparing them with holy Perſons, what *Job* ſaid of Man, comparing him with the Angels. *Ecce qui ſerviunt ei non ſunt ſtabiles, & in Angelis ſuis reperit pravitatem; quanto magis qui habitant domos luteas conſumentur a Tinea?* If theſe Spirits which ſerve God as Miniſters are not ſtable, and if he find fault in the Angels themſelves, by how much more reaſon will Souls encloſed in Bodies, as in Houſes of Clay, be ſubject to Corruption and Sin? Or what *Eſaias* ſaid, *Super humum populi mei Spina & vepres aſcenderunt; quanto magis ſuper omnem Domum gaudii Civitatis exultantis?* If the ground of my People, ſaith our Lord, is covered with Briars and Thorns, that is, if the Souls which ſigh after their Celeſtial Country, are ſometimes pierced by the Stings of Sin, what diſorders will not thoſe run into who live in Pleaſures, and whoſe Hearts are filled with all the fooliſh Joys in this World? *Quanto magis ſuper omnem domum gaudii Civitatis exultantis?*

VII.

We ought to conſider that Plays are Tentations taught with gayety, which ſeparates and takes away Gods Grace from us, and inclines him more to forſake and abandon us to our own proper Corruption, than thoſe

thoſe whereinto we fall unawares. It is Raſhneſs, Pride, and Impiety to think that we are capable to reſiſt, without Grace, the Temptations we meet with in Plays; and it is a preſumption and a folly to believe that God will always deliver us from danger by his Grace, when we expoſe our ſelves voluntarily, and without neceſſity.

VIII.

We deceive our ſelves mightily in thinking that Plays make no ill Impreſſions upon us, becauſe we perceive not that they excite in us any ill deſires. There are many ſteps before we come to an entire Corruption of Mind and Heart; and 'tis always much harm to the Soul to deſtroy the Rampiers which ſave it from Temptations. 'Tis to wrong her much to accuſtom her to behold theſe ſorts of Objects without dread, and with a kind of Complacency, and to poſſeſs her that 'tis a pleaſure to love and to be loved. The averſion which ſhe had for them ſerved her as Fortreſſes which ſtopt the paſſage to the Devil, and when they are ruined by Plays, he enters afterwards eaſily. There is often a long time that we begin to fall before we chance to be aware of it. The misfortunes of the Soul are long and tedious; they have Preparations and Progreſſes, and it happens often that we lie under theſe Temptations, only becauſe we have weakened our ſelves in occaſions of ſmall importance.

IX.

Let thoſe then (who perceive not that Plays and Romances excite in their Minds theſe Paſſions which are ordinarily apprehended) not think themſelves, for that, ſafe, and let not them Imagine that theſe Lectures and theſe Sights have done them no harm. The Word of God, which is the Seed of Life, and the Word of the

the Devil which is the Seed of Death have this common, That they remain often a long time hidden in the Heart, without producing any ſenſible effect. God oftentimes joyns the Salvation of certain Perſons to words of Truth, which he hath ſown in their Soul twenty years before, and which he awakens when he pleaſeth, to make them produce the Fruits of Life. And the Devil contents himſelf likewiſe ſometimes to repleniſh the Memory with theſe Images, without going further, or forming yet any ſenſible Temptation. But at length, after a long time he enlivens them, even without our ſo much as remembring how they are crept in, to the end, that they may produce the Fruits of Death, *ut fructificent Morti*, which is the only mark he propoſeth in all that he hath done in reſpect of Men. We may ſay then to thoſe, who boaſt that Plays and Romances provoke not in them the leaſt evil Thought, that they expect a little, that the Devil will know when to take his time, and will be ſure to find a favourable Occaſion. Poſſibly engaging them to him by other ties, he neglects none to make uſe of thoſe which are moſt Viſible; but if he hath need of them to deſtroy them, he will not be wanting to employ them.

X.

If it ſhould be true, that Plays could produce no bad Effects upon the Minds of certain Perſons, they ſhould not therefore take them for Innocent recreations, nor believe that they are not guilty in aſſiſting at them. A Play is not acted for one ſingle Perſon. 'Tis a Shew which is expoſed to all ſorts of Humours, the moſt part whereof are Weak and Feeble, and to whom conſequently it is very dangerous. 'Tis their Fault, will you ſay, to be preſent in this Condition; It is true, but 'tis your Fault likewiſe, ſeeing that you make them contribute to the making them look upon Plays as an indifferent thing. The more you are orderly in your other actions, the more they are bold to imitate you

in that. Why, ſay they, Shall we ſcruple going to Plays, ſeeing that Virtuous People go thereunto? You participate then of their Sin; and if Plays hurt you not of themſelves, you are prejudiced by thoſe Damages which others receive by your Example; and thus you are the moſt blameable of all. Worldly Perſons of whom we take no Example, are ſcarcely faulty but by their proper Sins. But thoſe who will paſs for Virtuous, and who practiſe indeed ſome good Works, are faulty by their proper Sins, and by thoſe of others; and loſe not only the Merit of their Good Works, but they poyſon them in ſome ſort, in making them ſerve to engage others in Sin.

XI.

God asketh of Men, properly ſpeaking, only their love; but he demands it abſolutely. He will have no diviſion of it. And as he is their Sovereign Good, he Wills that they fix themſelves no where elſe, nor that they ſet their Minds upon any Creature, becauſe no Creature is their end. The fulneſs of Charity which we owe to God, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, permits not that we let any Current run out. *Nullum rivum duci extra patitur.* Therefore what goodneſs ſoever can be imagined in the Love of a Mortal Creature, this Love is always Vicious and Illegitimate, when ſpringing from any other than the Love of God; and it cannot ſpring from thence, when 'tis a Love of Paſſion, and Self-Intereſt; which makes us find our Joy and Pleaſure in this Creature. A Chriſtian, who knows what he owes to God, ought not to ſuffer any alteration in his Heart, nor any fixedneſs of this ſort, without condemning it; without being ſorry for it; and without beſeeching God to be delivered from it, and he ought to have an extream Horror that he himſelf ſhould be the Object of this Paſſion, and this inclination in any others, and thus in ſome ſort their Idol; ſeeing that Love is a Worſhip which is only due to God, as God can be only

only honoured by Love. *Nec colitur niſi amando.* 'Tis this which ſhews, that there is a great number of Women, who believing themſelves innocent, as having indeed ſome horror of groſs Vices, are yet nevertheleſs criminal before God, becauſe they are very glad to hold in Mens Hearts a place which belongs only to God. Theſe Women take pleaſure in being the Object of their Paſſion: They are glad that People fix themſelves to them, that they look upon them with Sentiments, not only of eſteem, but of kindneſs, and they ſuffer without trouble, that they witneſs it to them by this prophane Language, which is called cajolling. Therefore what care ſoever we may take to ſeparate Plays and Romances from theſe Images of ſhameful Diſorders, we ſhall never take away the Danger, becauſe we ſee always therein a lively Repreſentation of this Paſſionate tye of Men towards Women, which cannot be Innocent, and which will never be hindred ſo long as Women are delighted with the Pleaſure of being loved and adored by Men, which is no leſs dangerous, nor leſs contagious for them, than the Images of Diſorder, which are both Viſible and Criminal.

XII.

Plays and Romances do not only ſtir up the Paſſions, but they teach alſo the Language of Paſſions; that is to ſay, the Art of Expreſſing it, and making it appear Agreeable and Ingenious, which is no ſmall Evil. There are many who ſtuff them with bad deſigns, becauſe they want addreſs to explicate themſelves. And it often happens, that ſome Perſons, without being touch'd with Paſſion, and deſiring ſimply to ſhew their Wit, find themſelves afterward inſenſibly ingaged in Paſſions, which they only counterfeited at the beginning.

XIII.

The Pleaſure of Plays is a hurtful Pleaſure, becauſe ordinarily it comes from a corrupt Bottom, which is

ſtirr'd up in us, by things we ſee therein. And to be convinced thereof, we need but conſider, that when we have a great Horror for an action we take no pleaſure in ſeeing it repreſented, and 'tis that which obliges Poets to hide from the ſight of the Beholders, all that may cauſe this Horror in them. When we feel not the ſame Averſion for Fooliſh Loves, and other Diſorders repreſented in Plays, and that we take delight in beholding them; 'Tis a Token that we hate them not, and that they excite in us, I know not what Inclinations to Vice, which ſpring from the Corruption of the Heart: If we had the Idea of Vice in its Natural deformity, we ſhould not be able to ſuffer the Image of it; therefore one of the greateſt Poets of this Age obſerves, that one of his beſt Pieces hath not pleaſed upon the Stage, becauſe it ſtruck the Minds of the Spectators with the Horrible Idea of a Proſtitution, whereunto a Holy Woman had been condemn'd. But what he drew from thence to juſtifie his Play, *viz.* That the Theatre is now ſo Chaſt, that Men cannot ſuffer diſhoneſt Objects, is what manifeſtly condemn'd it. For we may learn by this Example, that Men approve in ſome manner all that is ſuffered; and all that Men ſee with pleaſure upon the Theatre, ſeeing that they cannot ſuffer what Men have a Horror for. And conſequently, there being ſo many Corruptions, and vicious Paſſions in Plays, the moſt Innocent, 'tis obſervable, that Men hate not theſe Diſorders when they take delight to ſee them acted.

XIV.

'Tis yet a great abuſe, and which deceives very many, to conſider no other bad effects in theſe Repreſentations, but that of giving contrary Thoughts to purity, and believing thus, that they hurt us not when they do it not in this manner; as if there were no other Vices but that one; and that we were not ſuſceptible of them. Nevertheleſs, if we conſider Plays made by thoſe who have

have been the moſt affected to this Honeſty, we ſhall find they have only forborn to repreſent ſome Objects which are entirely Diſhoneſt, to paint others as Criminal, and which are not leſs Infective. All their Works are nothing but lively Repreſentatives of Paſſions, of Pride, Ambition, of Jealouſie, and Vengeance, and chiefly of this Romantick Virtue; which is indeed, nothing but a Furious Love of ones ſelf. The more it colours theſe Vices with the Image of Greatneſs and Generoſity, the more it renders them dangerous, and capable of re-entring the beſt Souls, and the Imitation of theſe Paſſions does not pleaſe us; but becauſe the bottom of our Corruption doth excite at the ſame time, a Motion altogether like, which transforms us in ſome manner, and makes us embrace the Paſſion which is Repreſented to us.

XV.

It is ſo true, that Plays are almoſt always a Repreſentation of Vicious Paſſions, that the moſt part of Chriſtian Virtues are incapable of appearing upon the Stage. Silence, Patience, Moderation, Wiſdom, Poverty, Repentance, are no Virtues, the Repreſentation of which can divert the Spectators; and above all, we never hear Humility ſpoken of, nor the bearing of Injuries. It would be ſtrange to ſee a Modeſt and Silent Religious Perſon repreſented. There muſt be ſomething of Great and Renown'd according to Men, or at leaſt ſomething of Lively and Animated, which is not met withal in Chriſtian Gravity and Wiſdom, and therefore thoſe who have been deſirous to introduce Holy Men and Women upon the Stage, have been forced to make them appear Proud, and to make them utter Diſcourſes more proper for the antient Roman Heroes, than for Saints and Martyrs. Their Devotion upon the Stage, ought alſo to be always a little extraordinary.

XVI.

Common Affections are not proper to give the pleasure which is sought for in Plays; and there would be nothing more cold than Christian Marriage freed from passion on every side. There must always be some transport, that jealousie may enter; that the consent of Parents may be found contrary, and that Intrigues may be made use of, to make their designs Proper. Thus the way is laid open to those who shall be possessed with the same Passion, that they may make use of the same means, to arrive at the same end.

XVII.

The drift of Plays engage Poets to represent nothing but Vicious Passions. Because the end they propose to themselves is to please the Spectators, which they cannot do, but by putting into the Mouths of the Actors, Words and Sentiments conform to those whom they make to speak, or to whom they speak. Now they hardly represent any but Wicked Persons, and they speak only before Worldly People, whose Hearts and Minds are vitiated by disordered Passions, and wicked Maxims.

XVIII.

Worldly People, the ordinary Spectators of Plays, have three Principle Inclinations: They are full of Concupiscence, full of Pride, and full of esteem for Human Generosity, which is nothing but a disguised Pride. Thus Poets, to please them by adapting themselves to these Inclinations, are obliged to act in such sort, that their Works may roul always upon these three Passions, and fill them also with Love, sentiments of Pride, and Maxims of Human Honour. 'Tis this which causes that nothing is more pernicious than

Poetick

Poetick and Romantick Morality; becauſe 'tis nothing but a Collection of falſe Opinions, which ſpring from theſe three Fountains, and which are only agreeable, as flattering the depraved Inclinations of the Readers and Spectators.

'Tis by the ſame corruptneſs of Mind that Men, without trouble, hear horrible Opinions of a Perſon who would fight a Duel with his Friend, becauſe the World believed he was the Author of a Buſineſs, whereof he thought he was innocent.

Men liſten with delight to the Words of a Father to his Son, to whom he gave charge to revenge him.

And yet, conſidering theſe Sentiments according to Reaſon, there is nothing more deteſtable. But Men think that 'tis permitted to Poets to propoſe the moſt damnable Maxims, provided they be conformable to the Character of their Perſonages.

XIX.

'Tis not imaginable that theſe wicked Maxims which Plays are ſtuffed with ſhould do no hurt, becauſe Men go not to them to inſtruct their Judgments, but to divert themſelves: For they do not ceaſe to engraft their Impreſſions without Mens being aware of them, and a Gentleman will perceive an affront more lively, and will be more eaſily inclin'd to revenge himſelf by the Criminal way, which is very frequent in moſt parts, when he ſhall have heard and ſeen how a light affront is reſented in a Play upon the Principle of a falſe *Idea* of Honour.

The reaſon whereof is, that Paſſions excite him, not only by Objects, but alſo by falſe Opinions wherewith the Mind is prepoſſeſſed. The Opinion that Chimerical Honour is ſo great a Good that it muſt be maintained with the loſs of Life it ſelf, is that which hath produced, for ſo long a time, the bruitiſh rage of the Gentry of many parts. If we never ſpoke of thoſe who fight Duels, but as mad and ridiculous People, as

indeed they are, if we never repreſented this Fantom of Honour, which they make their Idol, but as a Chimera and Folly; if we had a care never to form Images of Revenge, but as baſe actions, and full of Cowardiſe, the motives which the Perſon offended would feel, would be infinitely more dull. But that which renders them more lively, is the falſe Impreſſion that there is of Cowardiſe to ſuffer an Injury. Now it cannot be denied but Plays which are ſtuffed with theſe bad Maxims, contribute much to fortifie this Impreſſion, becauſe the Mind being tranſported with them, and as it were beſides it ſelf, inſtead of checking theſe Sentiments, gives way thereunto without reſiſting, and placeth its pleaſure in feeling the motions they inſpire, which diſpoſes it to produce the ſame or the like upon occaſion.

XX.

Yet that which renders the Image of the Paſſions, which Plays propoſe to us, more dangerous, is, that the Poets, to make them agreeable, are obliged, not only to repreſent them in a very lively manner, but alſo to diveſt them of what looks more horrible, and to paint them out in ſuch a ſort by the nimbleneſs of their wit, that inſtead of gaining the hatred and the averſion of Beholders, they may on the contrary get their affection. So that a Paſſion which only cauſes horrors, if it were preſented in its natural dreſs, becomes lovely by the ingenious manner by which it is expreſſed.

If we diveſt the Image of the Paſſion of Anger of all the Paint the Poet beſtows on it, and that we conſider it by reaſon, we can imagin nothing more deteſtable than the fury of an incenſed Perſon, whom a fooliſh Paſſion cauſeth to violate all the Laws of Nature. Nevertheleſs this ſame diſpoſition of Mind ſo criminal in it ſelf hath nothing that is horrible, being dreſſed up in theſe Ornaments, and the Spectators are more inclined

clined to love this Fury than to hate it. We have made uſe of theſe inſtances on purpoſe, becauſe they are leſs dangerous to be reported. But it is true that the Poets practiſe this Artifice of diſguiſing Vices into Subjects more much hurtful than that. And if we conſider almoſt all Plays and all Romances, we ſhall hardly find therein any thing but vicious Paſſions beautified and ſet forth with a certain Paint which makes them agreeable to Worldly People. Now if it be not permitted to love Vices, may one take delight in things which tend to render them amiable?

XXI.

A Chriſtian having renounced the World, his Pleaſures, and his Pomps, cannot ſeek after Pleaſure as Pleaſure, nor Divertiſement for Divertiſement ſake. He muſt, that he may be able to uſe them without ſinning, act in ſome manner, that one may ſay truly of him, that he uſeth them with the moderation of one who doth uſe them, and not with the paſſion of one who loves them, *Utentis modeſtia, non amantis affectu.* Now as the ſole uſe of recreation is to renew the force of the Mind and Body, when tired with labours; ſo it is evident, that 'tis not permitted to divert ones ſelf over much, but as it is in eating.

'Tis eaſie to conclude from thence, that 'tis not a Chriſtian life, but a Pagan and Brutal life, to employ the greateſt part of our time in recreation, ſeeing that 'tis not permitted for ones ſelf, but only to render the Soul more capable of labour. For if no body doubt but that 'tis a dangerous life for a Man that ſhould do nothing but eat, and ſit at Table from morning till night, which the Prophet condemns in theſe words, *Ve væ qui Conſurgitis mane ad ebrietatem ſectandam, & potandum uſque ad veſperam.* 'Tis not hard to ſee that it is not leſs abuſing the life which God hath given us to ſerve him, to ſpend it totally in that which is called Divertiſement; ſeeing that the word it ſelf tells us,

that

that we ought to ſeek it but to divert our ſelves, and withdraw us from thoughts, and laborious Occupations, which cauſe in the Soul a kind of wearineſs, which we have need to repair.

This is ſufficient to condemn the moſt part of thoſe who go to Plays; For it is clear, that they go not thither to eaſe the Mind of ſerious Occupations, being that theſe People, and particularly Worldly Women, hardly ever employ or buſie themſelves ſeriouſly: Their Life is nothing but a viciſſitude of Divertiſements, which they paſs away in Viſits, in Game, in going to Balls and Masques; in Walking, in Feaſting and in Plays. What if they be vexed, as they often are, 'tis becauſe they have too much Divertiſement, and too little ſerious Employments? Their vexation is a diſlike of plenty and ſatiety, like to that of thoſe who have eaten too much; and it ought to be cured by abſtinence, and not by the alteration and change of pleaſures. They ought to divert themſelves in being buſied, for that lazineſs and idleneſs are the chief cauſe of their vexation.

XXII.

From hence it follows, that all thoſe who have no need of Divertiſement, that is to ſay, the moſt part of thoſe who go to Plays, cannot do it without ſinning; tho there ſhould be no other reaſon to believe them forbidden. But it follows not, that thoſe who have truly need to recreate the Mind, can go thither without ſin, becauſe Plays cannot paſs for a Divertiſement, not being able to work the effect, which is allowed to be ſought therein. For a Chriſtian can only ſeek a ſimple refreſhment of Mind, which may render him more capacitated to act Chriſtian-like, and according to Chriſtian Policy. Now Plays are ſo far from being aſſiſtant thereto, that there is nothing makes the Soul worſe diſpoſed, not only to the principal Chriſtian Occupations, as Prayer, but to Actions themſelves the moſt

moſt common, when one would do them with a Chriſtian Mind; that is to ſay, recollected, and attentive to God, which one ought to endeavour, as much as he can to conſerve in the outward actions. Thus as the need we have to eat, allows, not that it is permitted us to eat Meats ſerving only to weaken the Body; likewiſe the need of diverting our ſelves cannot excuſe thoſe who ſearch after ſuch Divertiſements, as only render their Mind leſs proper to act Chriſtian-like.

XXIII.

Plays and Romances render not only the Mind ill inclined to all actions of Religion, and Piety, but make it have a diſlike in ſome manner of all ſerious and common actions. As there is nothing repreſented in them but Courtſhips, and extraordinary Paſſages, and the Diſcourſes of thoſe who ſpeak on the Stages, are far enough removed from thoſe which are uſed in common; ſo Men take therein inſenſibly an inclination altogether Romantick; they are ſtuffed with Princes and Princeſſes; and chiefly the Women taking pleaſure in the reſpects which is given to thoſe of their Sex; the Image and practice of which, they ſee in the ſeveral Divertiſements, wherein the young Gallants pay to them what they have learnt in Romances, and treat them like Nymphs and Goddeſſes, imprints in ſuch a manner this ſort of life in the fancy, that the little affairs of their Huſwifery becomes unſupportable to them, and when they return into their Houſes, with this evaporated Spirit, and quite fill'd with theſe follies, they find all therein diſagreeable; and above all, their Huſbands, who being buſied about their affairs, are not always in the humour to render them thoſe ridiculous Complacencies, which are given to Women in Plays and Romances.

XXIV. The

XXIV.

The neceſſity which we have to repair the decay of our Bodies by nouriſhment cannot ſerve as an excuſe for eating voluntary Meats, which might imprint a venemous quality, which might trouble the Humors, and which might cauſe therein intemperance, becauſe this kind of Nutriment would be contrary to the end, or intent of eating, which is to conſerve the life of the Body. Thus the need we have ſometimes of refreſhing our ſelves, cannot excuſe them who eſteem Plays a Divertiſement; ſeeing that they imprint, as hath already been ſaid, bad qualities in the Mind, that they excite Paſſions, and diſorder the Soul.

XXV.

The neceſſity Men have to divert themſelves, is much leſs than they think, and conſiſts more in imagination, or in cuſtom, than in real neceſſity. Thoſe who are buſied in outward labours, need only a ſimple ceſſation from their labour. Thoſe who are employ'd in affairs troubleſome to the Mind, and not laborious for the Body, have need to withdraw themſelves from the diſſipation which ſprings naturally from theſe ſorts of Employs, and not to diſperſe themſelves yet more by Divertiſements which bind the Mind ſtrongly. 'Tis an abſurdity to think, that there is need to ſpend three hours at a Play, to ſtuff the Mind with Fooleries. Men in theſe days have not their Minds made otherwiſe, than thoſe in the times of *St. Lewis*, who employed his time well when he baniſhed Plays out of his Kingdom. Thoſe who feel in them this need, ought to conſider it, not as natural inability, but as a Vice gotten by cuſtom, which muſt be cured by employing themſelves ſeriouſly. A Man who hath laboured ſore, is ſatisfied when he leaves working, and diverts himſelf in all that doth not buſie him. Plays are only neceſſary for thoſe who divert themſelves always,

and

and who endeavour to remedy the diſlike, which naturally accompanies the continuation of Pleaſures. And as this neceſſity comes only from their evil diſpoſition, which they are obliged to Correct, it may be ſaid, that 'tis needful for no Man, but that 'tis dangerous to all the World.

XXVI.

But there is nothing that ſhews the dang[illegible] better, and how much they are forbid to Chriſtians, than the Oppoſition they have with the Principle Diſpoſitions in which Chriſtians ought to eſtabliſh themſelves, and to which they ought to tend, altho' as yet they may be ſeparted through weakneſs from their Virtue. The Firſt, is continual Prayer, whereof the Apoſtle gives an expreſs Command in theſe words; *Sine Intermiſſione orate. Pray without Intermiſſion*; and Jeſus Chriſt by theſe, *Vigilate & orate, ne intretis in tentationem, Watch and pray leſt you enter into temptation.* Becauſe temptation being in ſome ſort continual Prayer, the remedy ought to be ſo likewiſe. 'Tis true, that this continuation and perſeverance in Prayer, cannot conſiſt in a perpetual Attention of the Mind to God, and that 'tis ſufficient that it remain always in a ſimple Deſire that God knows it: but 'tis certain, that this Deſire is eaſily extinguiſhed, if care be not had to nouriſh it by actual Prayers, and by meditating upon Divine things.

Therefore, Chriſtians not being able to lead their whole Lives in the act of Prayer, are, at leaſt, obliged to renew it from time to time before God; and as it is by theſe actual Prayers that they entertain that which ought to be always at the bottom of their Heart; they ought with great care avoid all that may render theſe Prayers unworthy of being preſented before the Divine Majeſty, which not only obliges them to fly diſtractions which happen to them in Prayer, but much more the ſources of diſtractions, which filling the Soul with

with ſooliſh thoughts, renders it incapable of applying it ſelf to God.

This is ſufficient to oblige thoſe who are careful of their Salvation, to fly Plays and Romances, becauſe there is nothing in the World which deſtroys the Soul more, which renders it more incapable of applying it ſelf to God, or which fills it more with vain Fancies. They are ſtrange Prayers which are made coming from the [illegible]s, or from theſe Lectures, having the Head filled with all the Fooleries which they ſaw there. Man is not able to procure to himſelf the Spirit of Prayer, nor this Holy Zeal which excites him when God pleaſeth, by Meditation: *Et in meditatione mea exardeſcet ignis*; but the leaſt that can be done, is to put no obſtacle by doing voluntarily, what is directly oppoſite to this Spirit.

XXVII.

God eaſily pardons the Diſtractions which ſpring from the frailty of Nature; but he does not ſo with thoſe which are voluntary in their ſources, ſuch are thoſe which Plays produce; therefore there is reaſon to fear, that all the Prayers of them who go to Plays, being full of theſe kind of diſtractions, are more capable to irritate God, than to appeaſe him, and that they are of the number of thoſe which the Prophet ſpeaks of. *Et oratio ejus fiat in peccatum*: *Let his Prayer be imputed to ſin.* Now if their Prayers which ought to invite the Spirit of God over all the body of their Works, are themſelves defiled, what ought Men to judge of the reſt of their actions? *Si lumen quod in te eſt, tenebræ ſunt, ipſæ tenebræ quantæ erunt.*

XXVIII.

One of theſe principal parts of Piety, and one of the chief Means to conſerve it, is to love the Word of God, and to place our Conſolation therein. 'Tis by

by the ſentiment of ſweetneſs which the Prophet had taſted in this ſpiritual Nutriment, that he ſaid to God, *Inventi ſunt ſermones tui & Comedi eos, & factum eſt verbum tuum in gaudium & in lætitiam Cordis mei. I have found thy words, and I have fed my ſelf with them, and they have fill'd my heart with joy and delight.* 'Tis this Conſolation ſo Divine which entertains our hopes according to St. *Paul*, and which maintains us in the Croſſes of this Life. Now experience may make known to all the World, that nothing doth deſtroy this Spiritual Joy, that Men reſent in the reading the Word of God, more than Worldly and Senſual Joys, and principally thoſe of Plays. Theſe two joys are abſolutely incompatible; Thoſe who pleaſe themſelves with Plays, are not ſo with Truth; and thoſe who take pleaſure in Truth, have nothing of ſatisfaction in thoſe ſorts of pleaſures. Therefore the ſame Prophet to whom God hath given this Spiritual Taſt, for his Word witneſſeth preſently after, that he could not ſuffer aſſemblies of Games, and Divertiſements; and that he put all his Glory and Joy, to conſider the wonderfulneſs of God's handy-work: *Non ſedi cum concilio ludentium, & gloriolus ſum à facie manus tuæ.* And the Holy King *David*, who had alſo taſted the ſweetneſs of the Divine Law, doth witneſs likewiſe the contempt it made him conceive of all vain Diſcourſes of Worldly Men; *Narraverunt mihi Iniqui fabulationes, ſed non lex tua.* 'Tis the ſentiment which the Holy Ghoſt inſpires into all thoſe to whom he gives a Love for his Holy Word. All thoſe Divertiſements which are ſo agreeable to thoſe who love the World, are to them an unſavory meat, which they cannot eat, becauſe they ſee nothing therein but Emptineſs, Naughtineſs, Vanity, and Fooliſhneſs, and find therein a want of the ſalt of Truth and Wiſdom; which cauſeth them to ſay with *Job*, that they cannot taſte it. *An poterit Comedi Inſulſum, quod non eſt ſale Conditum? Whether he could eat of this meat, which was not ſeaſoned with Salt?*

But

But on the contrary, if the Soul addict it ſelf to theſe falſe Pleaſures, ſhe preſently loſes the pleaſure of Spiritual ones, and finds only the Word of God unſavoury. Theſe are thoſe ſowr Grapes, whereof the Prophet ſpeaks, which ſet the Childrens Teeth on Edge. *Omnis homo qui Comedit uvam acerbam, obſtupeſcent dentes ejus:* That is to ſay, according to the Explication of St. *Gregory*, That when Men feed of the vain Joy of the World, the Spiritual Senſes become incapable of Taſting and Underſtanding of Heavenly Things. *Qui præſentis mundi delectatione paſcitur, Interni ejus ſenſus ligantur, ut jam ſpiritualia mandere & intelligere non valeant.* Now amongſt the Delights which extinguiſh the Love of God's Word, It may be ſaid that Plays and Romances are of the firſt Magnitude; becauſe there is nothing more oppoſite to Truth, and the Spirit of God, as St. *Bernard* ſaith, being a Spirit of Truth cannot take part with the Vanity of this World. *Sed nec erit ei unquam pars cum mundi vanitate, cum veritatis ſit ſpiritus.*

XXIX.

God imputes not to us the Coldneſs which comes from the Subſtraction of his Lights, or ſimply from the Heavineſs of the Body; but doubtleſs, he imputes to us thoſe which by our neglect we have contributed unto. He wills that we eſteem nothing ſo much, as the precious gift he hath made us of his Love; and that we be careful to embrace it in giving it nouriſhment. 'Tis the Command which he hath given to all Chriſtians, in the Perſons of the Prieſts of the Ancient Law, to whom he orders to maintain always the Fire upon the Altar, and to be careful to add every day in the Morning wood to it. *Ignis in Altari ſemper ardebit, quem nutriet ſacerdos, ſubjiciens mane ligna per ſingulos dies.* This Altar is the Heart of Man, and every Chriſtian is the Prieſt, who ought to have a care to nouriſh upon the Altar of his Heart, the Fire of Charity,

Charity, by putting thereto every day ſome Wood, that is to ſay, in entertaining it, by meditating of Holy things, and by exerciſes of Piety. Now if thoſe who go to Plays, have yet any ſenſe of Piety, they muſt neceſſarily grant, that they abſolutely extinguiſh and ſlay Devotion. And thus they ought not to queſtion, but God will judge them culpable; for having made ſo little account of his Love, that inſtead of nouriſhing, and of endeavouring to augment it, they have not feared to extinguiſh it by their Vain and Fooliſh Divertiſements; and that he will impute to them as a great Sin this Coldneſs, or the loſs of their Charity. For if the Diſſipation of Worldly Goods, and of terreſtrial Gold by Play, and by Exceſs, be not a ſmall Sin; what ought Men to think of the Diſſipation of of the Goods of Grace, and of this inflamed Gold the Scripture ſpeaks of, which we ought to buy at the loſs of all the Goods, and all the Pleaſures of this Life.

XXX.

The Fathers blame as a dangerous Raſhneſs, the Conduct of thoſe who being not as yet grounded in the Love of God, employ themſelves with too much eagerneſs in outward good Works, under pretence of Charity; becauſe it is difficult that the Mind be not much diſſipated in theſe Exerciſes: *In terrenis quippe actibus*, ſaith St. *Gregory*, *valde frigeſcit animus, ſi necdum fuerit per Intima dona ſolidatus. If the Soul be not fortified in the inward Life by Grace, ſhe becomes very cold in Terreſtrial, and Worldly employments.* What judgment would he have made then of thoſe, who being yet weaker, do nevertheleſs make no difficulty of going to Plays, which diſſipate the Mind more than the greateſt Employments, and can be excuſed neither by Charity nor by Zeal, being that Men ſeek therein only Pleaſure.

XXXI.

No Man doubtleſs would approve that a *Carthuſian* ſhould go to Plays, becauſe all the World ſees the great diſpoportion of this Divertiſement with the Holy Life he profeſſeth. But we are not ſtruck, that many Chriſtians make little or no difficulty of going thither, becauſe we know not the Holineſs to which they are obliged by the Vow of their Baptiſm. We conſider not, as S. *Paulinus* ſaith, that by the Grace of this Sacrament they have been buried with *Jeſus Chriſt*, that they have promiſed to embrace his Croſs, to live no more for themſelves nor the World; but that Jeſus Chriſt may live in them. We conſider that a Chriſtian Life ought not only to be an Imitation, but a Continuation of the Life of Jeſus Chriſt; ſince that 'tis his Spirit which ought to act in them, and by them, by imprinting in their Hearts the ſame Sentiments which it hath in that of Jeſus Chriſt. If we did obſerve a Chriſtian Life by this means, we ſhould ſoon know how much Plays are oppoſite thereunto, and there would need no Reaſons to convince thoſe who would be perſuaded of the Capital Truths of our Religion, as there needs none to convince a *Carthuſian*, inſtructed in his Order, that theſe diverſions ſo prophane are forbidden him.

XXXII.

All our actions are due to Jeſus Chriſt, not only as to our God, but as to him who hath redeemed us at the Price of his deareſt Blood, to oblige us to glorifie him in all our Works, as S. *Paul* ſaith. All our actions muſt relate to his Glory, and muſt witneſs, that we will imitate Jeſus Chriſt crucified; that we love what he hath loved, and hate what he hath hated. And as he is the beginning of all good Works, and that the Grace by which we do them, is the Fruit of the Croſs; we ought to thank him for all thoſe, which his

his Spirit hath made us do. Laſtly, we ought to ſay truly, that we do them for him, and by his Love. Now would it not be to ſcoff at God and Man, to ſay that we go to Plays for the love of Jeſus Chriſt? ſhould we dare to offer him this action, and tell him, Lord, 'tis in obedience to thee that I will go to Plays; it will be thy Spirit which will guide me thither; it will be thee who ſhall be the Principal of this Action; 'tis by the Croſs that thou haſt made me deſerve it? Is there any one ſo blind or ſtubborn, who can ſuffer without horror, the Impiety of this Language? and even thoſe who labour the moſt to juſtifie Plays, have they ever dared to offer this action to God? Have they ever thought to give thanks to God for having aſſiſted thereunto? Is not this an evident proof that their Conſciences belye their falſe Lights; and that they themſelves are convinced from the bottom of their Hearts, of the harm there is in Plays, although they endeavour to diſſemble it by the weak Reaſons, which their Wits furniſh them with? For every action which we ſhould not dare to offer to God, every action, whereof Jeſus Chriſt is not the Principal; every action which we cannot do to obey him; every action which cannot be the Fruit and Effect of his Croſs; In fine, every action which we dare not thank him for, may not be good, nor permitted a Chriſtian.

XXXIII.

If a Chriſtian conſider himſelf as a Sinner, he ought to acknowledge that there is nothing more contrary to that State which obliges him to Penance, Tears, and to avoid unprofitable Pleaſures, than the hunting after ſuch Vain and Fooliſh Recreations, and ſo dangerous as Plays. If he conſider himſelf as a Child of God, as a Member of Jeſus Chriſt, illuminated by his Truth, enriched by his Graces, nouriſhed with his Body, Heir of his Kingdom; he ought to judge that there is nothing more unworthy ſo high a Quality, as

the taking delight in theſe fooliſh pleaſures of the Children of the World.

XXXIV.

The Soul cannot conſerve a true Piety, without the aſſiſtance of a wholeſome Fear, which ſhe conceives at the ſight of dangers, wherewith ſhe is environed. She cannot be ignorant of the Power and Malice of her Enemies, who go round ſeeking how to devour her, as the Scripture ſpeaks. She knows, as S. *Paulinus* ſaith, that all Corporal Creatures, which draw our Hearts by the Means of our Eyes, are ſo many Nets, which the Devil makes uſe of to catch us in; ſo many Swords wherewith he endeavours to run us to the Heart. She knows that ſhe marches in the midſt of her Enemies, and of a thouſand Snares, and that ſhe walks there without Light, or Strength; becauſe ſhe ſees only darkneſs in her Underſtanding, only weakneſs in her Will, and rebellion in her Senſes. The Experience of ſo many Souls which loſe themſelves by their ſight, and the general Diſorder which reigns every where, makes her know, that there is nothing ſo rare as Chriſtian Virtue; nothing ſo eaſie as to loſe ones ſelf; nothing ſo difficult as to be ſaved. How then can ſhe joyn with ſo juſt a fear of terrible Evils, which threaten her, the Vain rejoycing of the World, and feed her Mind with Chimeras, which Plays ſtuff it withall? Is it not viſible, that as the Natural Effects of Plays are to ſtifle this ſo wholſome Fear? Alſo the effect of this Fear, ought to ſtifle the deſire of Unprofitable and Prophane Recreations, and to make her conclude, that ſhe hath many other things to think of in this World, than going to Plays: That the time God beſtows on her, is too precious to be loſt unfortunately in theſe vain amuſements; ſo that when ſhe gives her ſelf over thereunto, it muſt needs be, that ſhe is blind, that ſhe hath loſt the remembrance of her dangers, and that ſhe hath ſtifled in this manner, that Diſpoſition, by which the Holy Spirit enters into the Heart, and is entertained there whilſt it remains therein.

XXXV. One

XXXV.

One of the firſt Effects of the light of Grace, is to diſcover to the Soul, the Emptineſs, the Meanneſs, and the Inſtability of all Worldly Things, which ſlide and vaniſh away like Fantomes, and to make it ſee at the ſame time, the Grandeur and Solidity of Eternal Goods. And this Diſpoſition produceth of it ſelf a peculiar Averſion for Plays, becauſe it perceives therein an Emptineſs and Meanneſs altogether peculiar. For if all temporal things be nothing but Figures and Shadows, in what rank ought Plays to be put, which are only the Shadows of Shadows, ſeeing that theyare nothing but the vain Images of temporal Things, and oftentimes falſe things alſo?

XXXVI.

Sin hath open'd the Eyes, to make Men ſee with pleaſure the Vanities of this World: and Grace in opening the Eyes of the Soul for the things of God, ſhuts them to Worldly things, through a blindneſs, much more fortunate than that miſerable ſight which ſin hath procured us. 'Tis this wholſome blindneſs, ſaith S. *Paulinus* which the Prophet begg'd of God; when he ſaid, *Hinder my Eyes from ſeeing Vanity.* And which our Lord prefers before the clear-ſeeing Eyes of the Jews, when he told them, *Si cæci eſſetis non haberetis peccatum. If ye were blind, ye ſhould have no ſin.*

If then we are obliged in quality of Chriſtians, to beg of God, that he will take away our Eyes from all worldly Follies, of which, Plays are as it were a Compendium, and imprint in us a Hatred, and an Averſion for them in the Heart: How can we think that we ſhall be able to ſatisfie our Eyes with theſe vain Sights, and to place our Satisfaction and Content, in what ought to be the Object of our Averſion and Horror.

The Fifth Treatiſe.

Of Reports.

I.

WE ſcarcely ſee any one who does not complain of the Reports which are made of him, and who pretends not that others violate, in regard of him the Rules of Honeſty and Juſtice. And as theſe ſorts of complaints have not only a place in the World, but amongſt Perſons of Piety, in Societies the moſt orderly. It ſeems, that we have right to conclude from thence, that the Rules by which we ought to judge of the equity and neceſſity of Reports, are not known well enough. In the mean time we may ſay, that there is hardly any thing more important than to clear them, ſeeing that indiſcreet Reports are the moſt common Cauſe of Troubles and Diviſions, which happen not only in particular Friendſhips, but alſo in Societies, and even in whole Kingdoms, and that 'tis difficult that we do not commit many Faults if we be not well inſtructed what ought to be done to avoid them.

II. What

II.

What is ſtrange, is, That every Man complaining of others upon this point, no Man thinks he gives cauſe to others to complain of him. He ſaw enough thereof, who ſaid of others, That they are People who Conſtrue all things wrong, who report them ſo, who waſte and poyſon the moſt innocent and the moſt harmleſs Diſcourſes, who have neither Fidelity nor Secrecy: But we ſee not therein who attribute theſe faults to themſelves, and who believe they want neither Sincerity nor Honeſty. Finally, each would obſerve this Law willingly, that it might be permitted him to tell all that he would of other Mens Diſcourſes, and that it might not be allowed any one to report any thing of his.

But as the World pretending to this Priviledge, no Man obtains it indeed, it muſt make account that all things will go always almoſt alike, and that the World will always follow its Fancies and Paſſions, that there will always be found People who will ſuffer themſelves to report what they ſhall think fit, and thus they need only to be mindful to rule themſelves, that they may obſerve in this point, in reſpect of others, what Honeſty, Charity, and Juſtice demands of us.

III.

'Tis almoſt the ſole real Intereſt which we may have therein. For provided that we our ſelves commit not Faults, the Indiſcretion and Wickedneſs of others can hardly hurt us. They are evil for them, and ſometimes for thoſe who give ear to them and believe them, but not for thoſe whom theſe reports are made of, if they bear them as they ought. God oftentimes makes uſe of them to procure them conſiderable Benefits, and thereby to make them proſper by the deſigns of his Mercy upon them. Thus we have nothing to do but

to ſtand upon our Guard againſt our ſelves, and we ſhall be ſhelter'd from all the reſt.

IV.

We are ſo much more obliged thereunto, becauſe unleſs we be very attentive to our ſelves, it is very hard to avoid committing theſe kind of Faults, becauſe direction hath no certain and preciſe Rules, and becauſe we cannot eſtabliſh, upon this point, general Maxims. It is not true, that we cannot at ſome time report what we have heard. It is not true, that 'tis never permitted to tell what may be diſpleaſing to thoſe who have ſpoken it. It is not true, that it may be allowed to relate all that may be gain-ſaid without diſpleaſing them. And finally, Excepting the Maxim which commands that we relate nothing but Truth, all the reſt are not univerſal Truths, and they muſt be reſtrain'd by divers Conditions to make them Juſt.

V.

But 'tis not unprofitable nevertheleſs to know theſe Rules, and to have them preſent, becauſe it behoves us to ſtick to them, unleſs we clearly ſee that we are in the caſe of exception. Particular reaſons to obſerve the general Laws of Secrecy are needleſs, but there muſt be very clear and very preſſing ones to diſpenſe with them. So that when the leaſt doubt is ſtarted we muſt adhere to the Rule, and not to the Exception. This is the firſt Maxim which ought to be printed in the Mind upon this Subject; and will ſuffice alſo to mark out to us our Duty in the moſt part of Occurrences. For we are hardly wanting to ſecreſy, but through a fickleneſs which makes us paſs by all Doubts and reaſonable Scruples, which we perceive formed of our Underſtandings.

VI. The

VI.

The general Foundation of the tye which we commonly have to ſecrecy, in regard of what Men ſay to us in the way of Diſcourſe, is, That God having had in conſideration in all his Laws the linking Men together, and making them live in a well grounded Society, all that deſtroys this Society ought to be eſteemed as Wicked and Pernicious. Now it is manifeſt that 'twould be impoſſible that this Society ſhould ſubſiſt, if Men were in a continual Defiance of one another, if they looked upon one another as Enemies, and if they thought they might not communicate their Intentions to whomſoever it were, with ſecurity. 'Tis a Torment the Common People cannot endure, as being always upon the reſerve to ſay nothing that may be ill taken. This inconveniency cannot abſolutely be avoided; becauſe Minds being different, what one Man thinks good, another oftentimes takes it in the contrary ſenſe. There are elſewhere a thouſand things which have nothing of bad, being ſaid in particular, and which we cannot nevertheleſs tell again without Imprudence and Danger; ſo that if thoſe to whom we ſpeak, think that they have reaſon to relate all that Men tell them, there is almoſt no entertainment from whence we ought not to fear bad Effects.

VII.

Alſo let us not preſume to ſpeak to People with confidence, but in ſuppoſing them in another diſpoſition, and imagining that they have ſome fidelity and ſecrecy, and as every one may judge what they expect and what they reckon upon that, it may be ſaid that we engage our ſelves therein by giving ear to what others ſay to us, that they were promiſed Secrecy; and thus we are obliged to be upon our Guard, not only through conſideration of common profit, but by Virtue of this

Cove-

Covenant and this ſecret Promiſe. If we had not a Deſign to oblige them thereby, that ſhould be declared, and we ought to act in ſuch ſort that they may have no reaſon to expect it; becauſe it is reaſonable that thoſe who will not obſerve the Common Laws which are received amongſt Men, do at leaſt give notice to others of their reſolution, that we may not take them for that which indeed they are not.

VIII.

'Tis for this Reaſon that we cannot blame the Rule and Government obſerved in Monaſteries, which is to relate all to the Superior they hear ſaid ill of thoſe who live there. For Perſons choſen and try'd may well renounce all the entertainments of Confidence, and the Rule which obliges to theſe relations being known by all, each one is ſufficiently advertiſed to ſay nothing but what he deſires may be told again: After which thoſe who run the hazard of it ought to complain of themſelves, not of thoſe who do nothing but what ought to be judged they ſhould do. But as the ſame Law is not eſtabliſhed in the World, and that it would be alſo a Fault to eſtabliſh it therein, thoſe who are wanting in what may lawfully expected from them, do undoubtedly wrong Honeſty and Juſtice, and 'tis enough to judge them guilty of Infidelity, that they have not ſpoken to them with freedom, but upon conſideration that they would not have abuſed it at all, but would have kept ſecret what could not be told again, without injuring the Party who ſaid it.

IX.

There are ſome who never miſs, when they will that a Thing be not told again, to require abſolutely the Secret. And this is not a bad Cuſtom, becauſe that applies more the Imagination of thoſe to whom we ſpeak, and frees them from the trouble of diſtinguiſhing

guiſhing whether they could or could not relate what was told them, ſeeing that after the expreſs promiſe, there is no more to deliberate upon. But moreover, as this prevention would be very troubleſome in a long Diſcourſe, and that there are ſome who would be aſtoniſhed that they ſhould have ſo little truſt in their diſcretion, it is likewiſe hard to practice it always, and there ſhould be for that an application which many People are not capable of. It is requiſite then, that the Natural Secret ſupply the Defect of an expreſs engagement, there being no other difference betwixt Natural obligation to a Secret, and that which comes from an expreſs promiſe; only in the laſt we leave it not to him we engage in the freedom of diſtinguiſhing whether he can or cannot relate what was told to him; whereas in the other we remit it to the Diſcretion of him whom we ſpeak to, and imagine that he hath ſo much intereſt, as not to tell what he ſhall conclude prejudicial to him from whom he learnt what he knows. But the Obligation is alike in the one and in the other; and in one ſenſe it may be ſaid that a truly honeſt Man ought to think himſelf ſo much more obliged to ſecrecy, by how leſs cautious he hath been with him, and hath more relied upon his Diſcretion, and his Fidelity.

X.

'Tis but conſidering the bottom of the Heart to grant the juſtneſs of this Law. For who is he who would not that others ſhould practice it to him? Who is it that would not be glad to find in them this Fidelity, and complain of thoſe who want it? It follows then by the general Rule of Natural Equity, That each Man is obliged to practice this Fidelity towards others. There needs not for this expreſs Promiſes and Compacts: The fear of this natural Law is greater then that of all Promiſes and Compacts; and it may be ſaid even that this Promiſe is found there, and that 'tis that is obſerved by all thoſe ordinary Civilities which

which are render'd to People in the World. For if these Civilities be sincere as they ought to be, they signifie at least, that we are not Enemies to those to whom we pay them, that we have no design of harming them, and that we are disposed to practice, in respect of them, the Obligations of Honesty and common Civility. Now the least respect we can pay them is not to abuse, to their prejudice, what they shall have told us.

XI.

The right of a Pawn hath always been sacred amongst Men, and they have always esteemed it an Injustice to violate it without an excess of Baseness and Perfidiousness. Nevertheless, it is not needful that he who trusts a business of concern to another, take assurance for his faithfulness. He is engaged sufficiently to it in receiving it. Now what is it that Man does, in a particular Discourse, but render him whom he speaks to, depositor of his Thoughts, which he trusts him withall? Let it be then, that he require expresly the Secret, or that he do not, 'tis always the Pawn, which we ought to believe cannot be disposed, but according to the Intentions of him who hath trusted it.

XII.

There are Men enough who think themselves obliged to this Fidelity towards their Friends, but there are very few who extend this Obligation to Persons either Indifferent or Enemies. Thus Men think they are out of reproach, as to Reports, when they may say, they have no Obligation to those whom they concern, nor any engagement to advise them. But these Excuses come only from a base *Idea* we have of Charity. A true Christian is not only no Mans Enemy because he loves all Men, but he loves them all equally, according

according to St. *Auguſtine*, in wiſhing them all equally happineſs. What though they ſhew more kindneſs to ſome than to others, 'tis becauſe the outward effects of Friendſhip being limited, they owe them particularly to thoſe to whom the Providence of God hath aſſociated with him. 'Tis not then affection that he wants when he ſhews it not outwardly; 'tis this aſſociation. Now from the time that Men enter into talk with ſome one by particular Diſcourſe, the Providence applies us to him in giving us the means to practice [illegible] in its proper place, and by conſequence we are obliged to uſe him like a Friend, which at leaſt includes the Obligation not to abuſe his Confidence.

XIII.

But muſt we extend the ſecret to thoſe alſo who have violated it firſt by indiſcreet Reports, and who ſhall have abuſed, through Malice and Imprudence, the confidence which we have teſtified to them? Do not they take away the right of requiring from others by this means, what they themſelves have not obſerved? It ſeems at firſt, the firſt ſentiment conducts us thither; but if examined more ſtrictly, we ſhall find that it is rather a motive of indignation, than of Juſtice: becauſe, what would friendſhip be, if each one thought himſelf in the right of making a Magazine of all that ſhould ſlip from his Friends to injure them, in caſe they happen to fail in their Duties? Alſo *St. Auguſtin* obſerves equally amongſt the qualities of a Man of worth, never to diſcover what hath been put in truſt to him, and never to do any thing that he fears may be diſcovered. *Aliena peccata ſibi Commiſſa, non produnt; quæ prodi timeant, ipſi nulla Committant.* Aug. Ep. 15. We ought not therefore to ſuffer our Duty to depend upon anothers, nor commit Infidelities, becauſe another does ſo. If a ſlight and unfaithful Friend deſerve not that we manage him by this preſent ſtate and condition, he deſerves it by his paſt ſtate. Secre-

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cy is a Debt of that time; and as the Engagement was not at all conditional, it ſubſiſts even when Friendſhip ceaſeth: ſo that we ſhould not forbear to continue Debtor to a fickle and inconſtant Friend, if after having borrowed Money of us, he chance to break with us.

XIV.

[redacted]hath been ſaid of Friendſhip, may be ſaid of the Tranſitory Confidence, which we take in ſome, in diſcloſing to them things which we would not have known. For this Confidence or Truſt is a ſort of Friendſhip, which though not ſo ſtrong, nor laſting, ought to be regulated yet by the ſame Principles. We ought to love all Men, as we have ſaid already, and this general love becomes Friendſhip, being joined with familiarity. Thus a familiarity of many years, is a friendſhip of many years; and a familiarity of one day, is a friendſhip of one day. So as that as every Friendſhip doth oblige Secrecy, touching what is ſaid in the time of Friendſhip, Friends of one day, or one hour, are obliged to preſerve the ſecret of all things committed to their Truſt, during that day or hour, and the perfidiouſneſs of the one, can no way excuſe that of the other.

XV.

Hitherto I have not pretended to eſtabliſh any thing, but the general rule, which conſiſts in judging of what we ought to keep ſecret, and what we may diſcover by the conſent and approbation of thoſe from whom we had learnt them, as far as this conſent, and approbation is known to us. It is true nevertheleſs, that this rule admits of divers exceptions, but being ſeldom met withal in practice, do no way deſtroy the uſefulneſs of the rule. 'Tis for example, an indubitable exception to this Law of Secrecie; when any body communicates

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to us a criminal deſign, which we may hinder by diſcovering it. For we are ſo far from hurting civil Society, in not keeping it ſecret, that we ſhould deſtroy it by keeping it. Crimes are not matter of Truſt, and the commerce of Diſcourſe is not ordain'd to communicate Evil Deſigns one to another. Thus 'tis he who makes theſe deteſtable Overtures, that abuſes this chief tye of Society; and thoſe who tell again theſe wicked Diſcourſes, that they may hinder the bad effects of them, make good uſe of the indiſcretion of thoſe from whom they ſlip.

XVI.

We ought to ſay the ſame of certain Vices, pernicious to Human Society, and dangerous for certain Perſons. For if it happen that Men out of confidence diſcover them to us in diſcourſe, and that afterwards they would engage themſelves in Employments, whereof theſe Vices render them incapable, thoſe to whom they have diſcovered themſelves are not wanting to ſecrecy, if they avoid theſe unfortunate Engagements by diſcovering what they know of thoſe Perſons. I know by the declaration of a Man, that he hath bad thoughts of Religion, and nevertheleſs I ſee him ready to enter into an Eccleſiaſtical State. 'Tis ſo far from being a fault to give notice to thoſe who can hinder him, that it would be a greater not to do it.

XVII.

Finally one may yet except perchance from the Law of Secrecy, certain occaſions wherein Men diſcover in diſcourſe; deſigns and pretences, which though not expreſly wicked, are yet contrary to other pretences, and other deſigns, which we think *bona fide* more legitimate, and which we are more obliged to favour; provided that this obligation be ſo clear, that he who hath diſcovered himſelf raſhly, may be convinc'd himſelf of it.

it. For this diſpoſition whereby he may know what we are, ought to ſuffice to adviſe him not to lay himſelf open to us; and his inconſtancy having perſwaded him to do it, it appears not abſolutely injuſt, that we profit by his imprudence, to ſuſtain what we take for a greater good. But it is eaſie to ſee, that this caſe is very rare, and that it does not make thus a conſiderable exception from the Law of Secrecy.

XVIII.

Thoſe who have ſome Conſcience, or make profeſſion to have any, do not forbear to colour with ſome pretence of uſefulneſs, the reports they make of others, and think thereby to be exempt from all reproach of infidelity, when they have no engagement at all to ſilence. But to keep themſelves from this Illuſion, they muſt conſider that all profit is not ſufficient to juſtifie theſe Reports. It muſt be great, certain, that we cannot procure it by any other way. 'For 'tis a real inconvenience only to be wanting in the confidence they have had of us. 'Tis a ſource of diſunion, and 'tis to deprive ones ſelf of the means to ſerve thoſe who injoyn it. 'Tis to baniſh the overture of the Commerce of Diſcourſe. Laſtly, 'tis to injure Human Society, by filling it with diſtruſt and ſuſpicions. Thus the wrong ought at the leaſt to be recompenced by ſome certain and conſiderable profit.

XIX.

Whoſoever therefore feels himſelf thruſt forward to report what he knows not, but by particular diſcourſe, ought to examine all the following conditions; whether the thing which he is about to do, be very certain, and whether he hath not been miſtaken in the Idea he hath conceived thereof; whether it is ſo conſtantly bad, that he hath no reaſon to doubt of it; whether it is important that it be known to avoid

ſome great Inconveniency; whether this Inconveniency may not be avoided by ſome other means. Whether he have practiſed towards him who is intereſſed all the means preſcribed by the Goſpel to correct him. And if all theſe conditions happening, he be inclined to diſcover it afterwards, it ought to be preciſely only to thoſe who can give order therein, and not to thoſe to whom theſe reports would only ſerve to ſatisfie their Curioſity, or irritate their Malignity.

XX.

We ſhall be eaſily convinced of the extream Circumſpection that ought to be had in theſe Reports; if we make reflexion on the Conſequences, and terrible Indiſcretions which may be committed. For as ſoon as any Report is raſhly eſcaped from us, we are no more the Maſter of it. It multiplies and increaſes, and dilates it ſelf mightily; It ſerves as an Inſtrument to the Paſſion of ſome, and as a Nouriſhment to others, it produces oftentimes Diſagreements, and durable and permanent Animoſities, which have long and troubleſome Conſequences. It engages an infinity of People in conſiderable faults; and all this multiplication of Sins ſhall be imputed to thoſe who ſhall have given way thereunto by their Indiſcretion.

XXI.

I have hitherto only conſidered the Obligations to any Secret Thing which ſpring from the common Intereſt of civil Society and Fidelity, which is a continuation of that tranſitory Friendſhip, which is contracted with all thoſe who out of confidence ſpeak to us: And thus I have taken their Will for the rule of Reports, which may honeſtly be made from what ſhall have been told us. But as from hence it would follow, that one might tell again all that they ſhould be glad we ſhould tell; it may be added, that we are often obliged

to Secrecy, by the general Rule of Charity, which forbids the reporting many things, although those who have said them, should not think themselves obliged to it: for we ought not only to have respect to their Will, but also to their Good, and to the Good of others. It ought to satisfie us, that we know that some Report may really hurt some one to publish it. In a Word, we must regulate our Reports, not by what People desire in their Passions, but by what they ought to desire, therein having a Reason to suppose, that when their Passion shall cease, they will be glad that they had managed them so: and when this Passion shall not cease, we ought not to make our selves the Ministers to do hurt to others, or to our selves.

XXII.

Thus a Man of Worth will never fall into this Fault, which S. *Austin* calls *A horrible Plague*, to report to those who are angry against others, the Words of animosity which these Persons might have said against them; and he will follow without trouble this Maxim of that Holy Doctor, That 'tis not enough for a Man truly Charitable not to excite or augment, by his Reports, the Enmities of Men, but that he ought also to labour with his whole strength to Extinguish and Stifle them. *Animo humano parum esse debet Inimicitias hominum nec excitare nec augere male loquendo, nisi eas etiam extinguere bene loquendo studuerit.*

XXIII.

A Man, by following these Rules, avoids one part of the Faults which he commits in relating indiscreetly what he only knows by some particular Discourses. But that is not the only Fault which he is obliged to be careful of upon this Subject; That of believing lightly the Faults which others tell us, is of no less importance; and it may be said that 'tis yet more dangerous

gerous, becauſe we are leſs watchful on that ſide, and we ſuffer our ſelves ſo much more eaſily to fall thereinto, by how much it appears that we have no concern for it. We think that it belongs to him who relates ſomething, to give an Anſwer, and that we may relie upon him for the Truth of the Deed which he relates. In the mean time it is quite otherwiſe: For the Soul of that Man who hearkeneth, remains not without action; ſhe thinketh, judgeth, followeth her Paſſions, acts alſo oftentimes in following her Paſſions, and if ſhe have not had cauſe to yield to theſe Reports, thoſe Judgments are falſe, thoſe Paſſions injuſt, and thoſe actions diſorderly.

XXIV.

To comprehend, as to this Point, the Injuſtice and the Averſeneſs of moſt Mens Minds, we need only conſider, that when they are Cloathed with certain Ornaments, which the Order of this World hath aſſigned to Judges being aſſembled in a certain Place, and things are propoſed and treated of in certain Forms or Methods, they act ordinarily after a Diſcreet, Wiſe, and Equitable manner. The Diſcourſes of the one Party make no Impreſſions upon their Souls, unleſs they know what the other ſide hath to Anſwer to it. They examine ſcrupulouſly the Proofs; They reject thoſe which are falſe and uncertain; They give leave to weaken the Depoſitions of Witneſſes; they ſtop only at thoſe which are not deſtroyed by reaſonable diſproofs, and they never declare a Man guilty of a Crime which is imputed to him, unleſs he be abſolutely convicted of it. The ſole defect of Proofs ſufficeth them to abſolve the Accuſed, and to condemn the Accuſer; and when they want any of theſe forms, they condemn themſelves of Temerity and Injuſtice. But when moved to judge of ſome one in Particular without Power or Authority, they act clear another way. All Proofs ſuffice them, every Authority ſerves their

turn; every Witneſs is kindly received; and upon the bare Report of Perſons either prejudiced, or ill informed, or wavering and without judgment, they will declare, without any ſcruple, people guilty of all that others ſhall have been willing to lay to their Charge.

XXV.

Perhaps Men will ſay, that 'tis impoſſible to uſe in particular Judgments all the formalities of ſolemn Judgments. But if Men obſerve not the Garb and the Pomp, they ought at leaſt to obſerve therein what is neceſſary to aſſure themſelves of the Truth. Now it is no leſs neceſſary to form the Judgment and Underſtanding in particular, to know what each Party ſaith, then to paſs juridical Sentences of it. That which a Paſſionate, Inconſiderate, and Unconſtant Witneſs reports in a Diſcourſe, deſerves no more belief then what he depoſeth before a Judge, and he deſerves even leſs, becauſe the Oaths which the Judges draw from them, do much more apply People, who have any Conſcience or Honour, to ſay nothing that's falſe. A falſe and uncertain Proof is abſolutely Falſe and Uncertain. Nevertheleſs, thoſe who would make a Conſcience of Judging upon the Bench, on Proofs and Witneſſes of this Nature, make none at all oftentimes of Condemning People in particular upon very weak Proofs and Witneſſes, yet leſs received.

XXVI.

Doubtleſs there is nothing more unreaſonable then this unequal dealing; but it hath a very effective Cauſe in the Corruption of Mens Hearts. If they ſhew ſome Equity in publick Judgments, 'tis not becauſe they really love Juſtice, they would love it every where, if they loved it truly; but on the one part 'tis becauſe the Form to which they are bound, hinders them from going aſide, and that on the other, the Faults which they

they commit in publick would not remain abſolutely unpuniſhed, and would at leaſt be revenged by the outcry they would bring upon them, if they were not Chaſtiſed by the ſuperior Judges. There is nothing of that in the Judgments which we make in ſecret, upon the Reports Men make us. There is neither Form to be obſerved, nor Infamy to be feared. Thus as we have an entire liberty to follow the Propenſity of Nature, we follow it; and this Propenſity carries us to receive without Examination, all that Men have related to the Diſadvantage of our Neighbour; becauſe we naturally love to jeer at others, to ſcorn them, and to ſee them humbled; And on the contrary, we fear the Suſpenſion, the Reſervedneſs, and the Attention which hath always ſomething of tormenting, and laborious, which make us rather judge at hap-hazard, than take ſo much pains to judge well.

XXVII.

It is enough to have ſome Idea, and ſome love for Equity to condemn this Conduct. But leſt, that taking the ſame reſolution of judging adviſedly of Reports which are made to us, and not believing any which be not clad with circumſtances, which may make it entirely certain, we permit our ſelves nevertheleſs to be deceived thereby, by taking that for certain, which indeed is not ſo; It is good to reflect upon the Quantity of Reports, which we daily obſerve, which appearing Certain and Undoubtful, are not yet at leaſt found very falſe. Who, for Example, would not believe the Teſtimony of a Sincere Man, who ſaith, that he hath learnt ſuch and ſuch a thing, from ſuch an ones proper Mouth. Nevertheleſs, there happens daily differences amongſt ſincere Perſons, wherein one maintains, that he hath not ſaid what the other affirms he hath heard, without any reaſon of ſuſpecting either the one or the other, of Falſhood or Knavery. This may happen a thouſand ways, which might eaſily be diſcovered, if we

would but give attention thereunto. We correct at every turn, the Equivocations which ſlip from our Pens, in what we write, for fear they ſhould carry or bear falſe ſenſe in other Mens Minds, about what is propoſed to them, and the falſe Conſequences they may bring with them: and by the help thereof, we avoid always that what we write be not ill taken and miſconſtrued; and that we be not obliged to long Illuſtrations. What miſtakes may then follow in tranſitory Diſcourſes, made without any Care, Application, or Precaution, wherein we only expreſs moſt things imperfectly; oftentimes referring them to the Intelligence of thoſe we ſpeak unto? And who can wonder if they be ſometimes taken in a wrong Senſe; ſo that the one thinks he underſtands what the other never pretended to have ſpoken.

XXVIII.

The Senſe and Meaning of our expreſſions, is not abſolutely included in the terms which we make uſe of to expreſs our ſelves; it depends ſometimes of the preceding Diſcourſes. A Tone, an Inflection, a Behaviour, an Air alters the Signification, and often it depends of Thoughts which we imagine in thoſe to whom we ſpeak: ſo that if the want of attention, make them take leſs care of this Conſequence, this Tone, and this Air; or if we be deceived in attributing to them certain Thoughts which they had not, and which yet made part of the Senſe; they deceive themſelves almoſt neceſſarily in the Underſtanding of what was ſaid to them, and conceive quite another ſenſe, than that which we would have them to conceive.

XXIX.

There ſprings from thence yet another miſtake more ſurpriſing. 'Tis that as the Soul is not accuſtomed to conceive theſe things by the help of Words, every time that Men take what is told them in a contrary Senſe, this falſe Impreſſion is painted in their falſe Imagination,

on, with ſome certain terms, whereby they borrow ſome part from thoſe who ſpeak, and they themſelves furniſh the other part thereof. But in the end, the remembrance of what they have added, ſlipping out of their Minds, and not diſtinguiſhing what they have heard from what came from them, they attribute in good earneſt to him, who hath entertain'd them with, all the Words which denote the falſe Impreſſion they have conceived, becauſe they find it in their Mind, clad with thoſe words.

XXX.

There are ſome likewſe who reciting the Diſcourſes they have had with any one, and not remembring exactly ſome things, make them ſpeak according to the Remembrance which they have left them. But if one asked them then, if they be certain of what they relate, they would ſay, no, and that they would not be Vouchers. But in the concluſion, they come to quit their doubt, and to be aſſured that they have none in a very pleaſant manner. For in making theſe rehearſals, they imprint them ſtrongly in their Memories; and on the contrary, they forget this Diſpoſition of Diſtruſt and Uncertainty, with which they had made them at firſt; ſo that they think in concluſion, that this Remembrance is an effect of the things themſelves, whereas they came from the frequent repetition they have made of them.

XXXI.

It is therefore juſt, when we accuſe any one for having ſaid ſomething which may fall upon him or ſome other, to inform our ſelves before hand, that is, before we give credit to this Report, whether thoſe it concerns be agreed of it, and when we know that they diſallow it, Judgment muſt be ſuſpended, and enquiry made into the Circumſtances of the Report, how to

determine on one ſide or another. For it is ſometimes more probbale, that he to whom we attribute the thing, hath ſaid it, and ſometimes that he hath not. When for Example, one buſieth himſelf about a Diſcourſe, which notes ſomething of an Opinion, if he he diſavows it, declares that not only he never held ſuch a Diſcourſe, but that he is not, nor never hath been of this Sentiment; his teſtimony is infinitely more credible, than the report of thoſe who ſhould pretend to have heard this Diſcourſe from him. For a Sentiment is a thing which remains, in regard of which we can ſcarely be deceived, whereas it is very eaſie to take other Mens words in a wrong Senſe, and to be perſuaded in this manner, to have heard what he hath never ſaid.

XXXII.

We ſhould have never done, if we ſhould report by piece-meals, all the ways whereby we may be deceived in the intelligence of what is told us. 'Tis ſufficient that we be perſuaded in general, that there are many, and that thus, not only in the differences wherein the one affirms he hath not ſaid what another lays to his charge; but alſo in all reports which are made us, which are not abſolutely certain, we muſt hinder the Mind from reſolving out of hand, and ſtop the Motives, which are the Conſequences and Marks of belief. By this means we ſhall not participate at all of other Mens faults. We ſhall not enter into their Paſſions. If we apprehended ſome ſuſpicion of the conduct of thoſe, whom we underſtand have drawn a Picture very diſadvantageous, we ſhall not form an expreſs judgment thereof, wherein the greateſt ill that theſe Diſcourſes can do us, conſiſts. Laſtly, we ſhall always be ſo much more diſpoſed to clear them, by how much we ſhall not have reſolved concerning them.

XXXIII.

There remains only one paſſage, by which Reports can hurt us. 'Tis when we our ſelves are the Cauſe of it; and that People whom we ſhall have entertained confidently, attribute to us afterwards, Diſcourſes, either ridiculous or imprudent, which of it ſelf is able to exaſperate us againſt them, who make or believe theſe Reports. It is much more neceſſary to be prepared to behave our ſelves like Chriſtians in theſe rencounters, than 'tis to pretend that we can leave them abſolutely. For how circumſpect ſoever we may be of thoſe we talk with, we are often deceived in the quality of their Minds, and yet more in the diſpoſition of their Hearts. 'Tis likewiſe an effect of goodneſs to be deceived therein, and not eaſily to conceive ſuſpicions of Mens Fidelity. It is moreover impoſſible to foreſee all the ways, whereby falſe Spirits may abuſe our words, and all the falſe Idea's which they may form by this ſtrange mixture of their Imaginations with our Thoughts. We ſhould then renounce entirely Mens company, if we would not expoſe our ſelves to theſe inconveniencies, and as that is neither poſſible nor profitable to all the World, we muſt be content to avoid them as much as we can, and reſolve to bear them with Patience, when we are not ſo happy as to avoid them.

XXXIV.

If it happens then, that we fall thereinto, however it be, the firſt care and application we ought to have, is to hinder, that other Mens faults be not to us an occaſion of doing it on our ſide; and to beware alſo, that in complaining, that they have done us ſome injuſtice, it be not our ſelves who have offered it to them. For we know not what is imputed to them, for having ſaid of us, becauſe others have reported it. Now as they may have alter'd our words in relating them unto others,

others, we may also have alter'd theirs, in relating them to our selves. We must then at least be well assured of the Fact, before we complain thereof; and 'tis wherein we ordinarily miss, because we rather follow the impressions of Passion, which is stirr'd by the meer Image of the offence, whether true or false, then the light of Reason which is regulated by Evidence and Conviction.

XXXV.

We owe them the same Justice, and the same Reservedness when they endeavour to judge of the Motives, which they might have had in making these Reports. Some are worse than others, and it is not just to attribute without reason, the worst to them. It may be, what our spite makes us take for an effect of Hatred, Disdain, and Jealousie, is nothing but the effect of Inconstancy, Indiscretion, Prevention, and of a mistaken Conscience, and of a desire of diverting our selves. Let us have a care therefore, that our Passions go no farther than our Sight; and let us not imagine without Reason, that we cannot be deceived in earnest to our disadvantage.

XXXVI.

Likewise we must not be unmindful upon these occasions, to demand justice of our selves against our selves, of all Discourses, of all rash, inconstant, indiscreet, and of all wicked Judgments, which we have made of others; or pardon the Mind for all evil Effects, that they may have produced in their Heart, whereof we may judge better at that time, by our own proper judgment; and as we know not, what God imputes to us yet, nor what remains thereof to pay to his Justice; we ought to be ravisht'd that he hath given us means to obtain Pardon for them by suffering some small injustice, upon the account of others.

XXXVII. After-

XXXVII.

Afterwards we muſt conſider cloſely theſe reports and theſe noiſes which incommode us, being careful not to give them more ſubſtance and reality than they have. For oftentimes giving them a Being which they have not, and making them ſubſiſt by our imagination, when they are annihilated in that of others, we muſt not believe that Men who buſie themſelves ſo little with the moſt important Objects, yea, and the moſt ſolid, are of an humour to amuſe themſelves in any long time at reports noiſed abroad without ground. All theſe Relations have only a tranſitory courſe, and having ſerved for Diſcourſe, for ſome days, to idle and lazy Perſons, they are diſſipated and vaniſh away when they are weary of ſpeaking and talking of them. We have nothing to do then but let them paſs, and to ſlight them as vain Whimſeys, whereof nothing remains. Although they ſhould ſubſiſt for a long time, and that they ſhould make a very durable impreſſion, pity muſt be had of thoſe who ſhould conſerve it, ſeeing that 'tis to them rather than to us that 'tis hurtful.

XXXVIII.

But we muſt not only endeavour to preſerve our ſelves from the evil that theſe reports may do us, in ſwaying us to impatience: We muſt attempt to make them effectively uſeful; and they would be ſo doubtleſs, if we knew how to profit by the inſtructions which we might draw from thence. For what is there, for example, that can teach us better the vanity of that which Men call reputation, than the inconſtancy which the Commonalty of the World ſhew upon theſe occaſions? What proof ſoever a Man hath given of a good judgment, we ſhall not for that be leſs ready to hearken with pleaſure to a ridiculous ſtory, and without ground, which

which it ſhall pleaſe any one to make of him, provided there be found any croſs mind which gives him liberty.

The World is naturally ſo wicked, that it always ſeconds thoſe who will deſtroy anothers reputation, and if it hath ſometimes an eſteem for certain People, 'tis in ſome ſort againſt its will and in ſpight of it; ſo that the World is always glad to be aſſiſted to get rid of this eſteem, as of a thing that incommodes it. What is there then more ridiculous than to feed this vain Smoak, and to make it the end of our actions and labours?

XXXIX.

As it is neceſſary that Worldly Goods be intermixed with bitterneſs, leſt Men ſhould cleave too faſt to them, we ought to be glad alſo that Converſation, which is none of the leaſt of theſe Goods, have its diſguſt; becauſe there is almoſt nothing to which it is more dangerous to adhere unto. Men receive from it an Infinity of ſenſible and inſenſible Wounds; Virtue is often quite loſt by it, and we gather together all the corruption which is ſpread into ſeveral Minds. All that withholds us then to oblige us to a greater ſolitude, and to have Communication with few People, is very advantageous to us. Now there is nothing more capable to make us loath the Commerce of this World than to find little Honeſty and Faith in moſt People that we meet therein, and to learn by experience how much it is neceſſary to be upon our Guard when we are to Treat with thoſe whom we ſcarcely know. It may be ſaid alſo, that 'tis a happineſs to be freed from an ill affected Spirit, and which is capable to abuſe what is told it; that we ought to eſteem our ſelves happy when we have notice by ſome indiſcreet report which is raiſed of us, that we had no more Commerce with it without great neceſſity.

XL.

Nevertheleſs we ought not to ſtretch that Commerce ſo far as frequently to break with our Friends, when we have cauſe to impute ſome indiſcretion to them; for we muſt ſuffer in them this fault as others. But it ought to be a warning to us continually to behave our ſelves better in reſpect of them, not to injure our ſelves, and to be more upon our Guard; and by this meanſ Perſons who are neither Truſty nor Faithful will become oftentimes the moſt uſeful, by obliging us to apply our ſelves to be more cautious of our words, and to avoid all that may give them occaſion to abuſe them.

The

The Sixth Treatise.

Of the Remedies against Suspicions.

I.

CHarity carries us not towards God and our Neighbour, but in some manner towards it self. *I do this*, saith St. *Austin*, *by the love of your love*; *Amore tui amoris facio istud*: And 'tis in the same sense that the Kingly Prophet said in one of his *Psalms*, *My Soul hath earnestly coveted to desire your justifications*. *Concupivit anima mea desiderare justificationes tuas*. He did not only desire to accomplish the Law of God, which he understands by the word Justifications, but he also desired the desire of it. One desire produced another, because 'tis impossible that we love any one, but we must love also the Love which we bear him, desire to increase it, and fear the diminution and decay of it.

'Tis then a necessary effect of a true and sincere Love for our neighbour to make us fear all that may slacken this Love. All the Clouds which obscure never so little the lustre of Charity, are hurtful to it. All that hinders it from publishing it self freely, afflicts it; and it tends always to have a free course to its motions, and to dissipate all the obstacles which may hinder, stop, or trouble them.

Now

Now there is nothing occaſions this bad effect, more than the diſadvantagious impreſſions we conceive of our Neighbours, either upon Reports from others, or from the Idea's we form of them our ſelves. And conſequently there's nothing Charity ought to be more vigilant of.

II.

Theſe Impreſſions are capable of weakening Charity many ways. What care ſoever we take not to judge at all; theſe Impreſſions nevertheleſs, give us an inclination thereto; for they are the effects of Suſpicions, and Suſpicions diſpoſe to Judgments: and if theſe Judgments be raſh, they may not only hurt, but even blot out Charity, becauſe raſh Jugments may be, according to *St. Thomas*, mortal ſins. Thus, although theſe Impreſſions be not yet formed Diſeaſes, we ought nevertheleſs to take them for fore-runners, and preſages of a menacing ſickneſs. They are like the firſt Fits of a dangerous Fever which is like to follow, except it be prevented by remedies, which Chriſtian prudence may furniſh us with.

III.

Theſe Impreſſions make us ſuſpect the good it ſelf which we ſee in others, and hinder alſo from partaking of it, both by the joy we ought to be ſenſible of, and by the thanks which it is juſt we ſhould render to God, which is a very great evil. For God diſtributing his Graces to divers Members, which compoſe the Body of his Son, which is the Church, and not giving it all to all, he will nevertheleſs that they become all common to them by Joy and Thanks, which renders them all partakers of them. No Man can ſay, that his proper Graces and Favours are ſufficient without thoſe of others, which made *David* ſay, *Particeps ego ſum omnium timentium te, & cuſtodientium mandata tua.*

IV. Theſe

IV.

Theſe Impreſſions diſpoſe Men inſenſibly to take ill ſome words or actions of themſelves innocent, and wherewith we ſhould not have been troubled, if the Mind had not been already prepoſſeſſed with ſome ſuſpicion. One Impreſſion becomes the ſource of another, and what is worſe, we are almoſt never aware of it; becauſe we never aſcend to the firſt foundation, which is a raſhneſs of the firſt impreſſion.

V.

As they ſtop the courſe of our Charity towards thoſe of whom we harbour theſe diſadvantagious Opinions, they often produce the ſame effect in their Hearts, becauſe we oftentimes ſuppreſs them not ſo clearly, as that they perceive them not. Our backwardneſs therein produces the like in them, which God imputes to us, in reſpect of the occaſion we have given thereof. Thus we are inſenſibly ſeparated from one another, and if there remain yet ſome Charity, 'tis ſo diſguiſed, and hid by the Clouds of ſuſpicions, that it remains without action.

VI.

We muſt therefore ſhun theſe Impreſſions as much as we can. This is the concluſion whereto Reaſon leads us. But we cannot always; For there are ſome Impreſſions grounded upon ſuch evidence, that 'tis not poſſible to defend our ſelves from them. Likewiſe, we cannot eſtabliſh for a Rule, not to give ear to Reports, diſadvantagious to our Neighbour. For if they be true, and if they be neceſſary, or uſeful, we ought to hearken to them. Now there are ſome of this nature, when Jeſus Chriſt wills that we take two Witneſſes of the Faults which we deſire to correct in our Brethren,

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he obliges theſe Witneſſes to ſee them, and when he orders to tell them to the Church, he wills the Church to hearken to them. Seeing that he inclines us to lament for the miſchiefs of the Church, he pretends not that we ſhould ſhut up our Eyes, that we may not ſee them; ſeeing that he wills us to judge of falſe Prophets by their Works, he ſuppoſes that we know them. Finally, ſeeing that he obliges us to treat with Men, and to vary our Conduct according to their different diſpoſitions, he would gladly, without doubt, that we be not dim-ſighted, as to what appears to us thereof, without which, it would be impoſſible, but that we ſhould fall into theſe Snares Men lay for us, which he commands us to avoid in theſe following words, *Cavete autem ab hominibus.*

VII.

There is properly then none but falſe and raſh Impreſſions, which we are obliged to caſt away and deſtroy. It is enough in regard of the true ones, when contrary or againſt our Neighbours, that we receive them with trouble, and that God ſee in our Hearts, that we ſhould be very glad they might be falſe; that they ſerve not as a Suſtenance to our Malignity, but as an Object of Grief to our Charity; and in a word, if we look upon them in the ſame manner as our own, the continuation and increaſe whereof we do not at all deſire.

VIII.

But if this diſpoſition be ſincere, it is abſolutely neceſſary that it make us glad when we have means to expunge this Impreſſion, and that we know that we are deceived. 'Tis by this means that we may judge of the bottom of the Heart. Becauſe if Men, on the contrary, pluck not theſe Opinions from us but with pains; if we feel a ſecret ſpight againſt thoſe who

diſabuſe us; if we have Eyes only to ſee what favours our ſuſpicions, and that we have none for all that diſcover the uncertainty and falſity of them; 'tis a ſign that we have ſome connexion or tye thereunto, and that far from thinking them a burden, which is troubleſome to us, and whereof we would willingly be delivered, we take a particular pleaſure therein, which ſprings from the depravedneſs of the Heart.

IX.

Charity demands yet more than this. It makes us not only receive willingly, all that is able to deface or diminiſh our ſuſpicions, when Men offer to undeceive us, but oftentimes obliges us to go even to Truth, and ſeek of our ſelves the explanations which we are able to find. For it makes us regard theſe explanations as a Good, which deſerves to be ſought after, as the deliverance from Evil, and from Tentation; And laſtly, as a debt of Juſtice which we ought to practice; Seeing that we all deſire that others ſhould practice towards us, this equity of clearing as much as they ſhould be able, the Truth, inſtead of continuing in the Impreſſions, and thoſe very diſadvantageous, which Men ſhall have given of us.

X.

There is nothing more evident than the Juſtice and the Importance of this Duty. But for all that it is frequently very ill practiſed. For moſt part of the World are equally eaſie to receive Impreſſions, and neglect to clear themſelves of them. Being more apt to ſuppoſe them true, than to examine whether they are ſo or no, Self-Love ordinarily makes this ſide be taken; and for that there needs nothing but to ſuffer the two main ſprings of Mens Rule and Conduct, Idleneſs and Vanity to act: Idleneſs hinders us from the care of informing our ſelves exactly of things, becauſe it is always ac-

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companied with ſome ſort of labour. Vanity fixing us to our Opinions, makes us apprehend, being obliged to go from our word, and to acknowledge that we have been inconſtant and credulous. 'Tis by this means that the moſt falſe impreſſions become perpetual, and that there are ſo few that ſhake them off. When we cannot conſerve them abſolutely, we conſerve always ſomething of them, becauſe we deſire to give always ſelf-love that conſolation of not having been deceived without ſome reaſon. Even thoſe, who through a motive of Conſcience, forbear judging abſolutely, are more eaſie to continue in ſuſpence, than to free themſelves wholly from it, by an entire explication. For Self-love is not miſtaken in this condition: If we condemn not People, we think therefore we are diſpenſed from juſtifying them, defending, maintaining, and approving their Intereſt. We weaken by this doubt, the praiſes Men give them; we obſcure the glory of their Virtue, and we keep them in a low condition, in looking upon them as ſuſpected Perſons.

XI.

As Charity inſpires us with Sentiments, quite oppoſite to thoſe of Self-love, ſo Charity makes us take a quite different Conduct. And to expreſs in few words, the degrees through which Charity leads us. 1. It cauſeth us not to receive theſe diſadvantageous impreſſions of our Neighbour, but by neceſſity and conſtraint. 2. It carries us to keep them in their juſt boundaries, and to avoid taking for certain what is not ſo. 3. Charity makes us always deſire ſincerely, that theſe Impreſſions be taken from us, and favourably to hear thoſe who undertake to do it. 4. Charity enclines us to embrace with joy, all the ways to make Truth evident, and to free it ſelf clearly of thoſe impreſſions which holds its motives by a kind of conſtraint, by keeping nevertheleſs certain meaſures preſcribed by prudence, not referring them to thoſe who

XII.

ſhall have reported theſe things, and not rendring them odious, by diſcovering them to be the Authors of thoſe Reports.

There are ſome People who dare not clear themſelves of their ſuſpicion, for fear of ſtartling thoſe of whom they conceived them, in opening themſelves to them. But there is a great deal of appearance that Self-love hath a greater ſhare than Charity in this reſerve. Charity is not ſo fearful, becauſe it imagines not ſo eaſily, that thoſe to whom we declare theſe ſuſpicions are able to hurt it. Charity would think it an injury to attribute to them a delicateneſs ſo unjuſt as this. Charity knows how to make theſe Explications in a ſimple and humble manner, that 'tis not poſſible almoſt to hurt it. For ſhe is ſo far from ſhewing any inclinations for thoſe ſuſpicions, that ſhe ſhews on the contrary, that ſhe deſires nothing more than to forſake them in changing her Opinion. We ſcarcely offend againſt thoſe who deſire to be enlightened with this Spirit. But that which makes one troubled at theſe explications, is, that thoſe who do them, witneſs oftentimes more eagerneſs to maintain their Opinions, than to inſtruct themſelves whether they be true or not.

XIII.

If we followed theſe Rules and this Conduct, we ſhould ſee the greateſt part of the Differences which weaken Charity amongſt Perſons profeſſing Piety, vaniſh away. For there are very few of them which are not produced, or which are not maintained by theſe Impreſſions, which we do not explain at all. But the worſt is, that every one would that others do them this Juſtice, and yet there are not many that practiſe it themſelves in reſpect of others. Nevertheleſs this common Injuſtice muſt not withold and hinder us from doing

doing to others what Charity preſcribes us, ſeeing that this injuſtice is evil for them who fall into it, and that Charity is always a Good, and a Spring of Goodneſs for all thoſe who follow her Motives and Rules.

XIV.

Behold what we owe to our Neighbour when we have conceived theſe Impreſſions to his diſadvantage. But what ought we to do when others on the contrary are prejudiced againſt us by injurious and unjuſt ſuſpicions? Is it ſufficient to bear them with patience, and to make no paſſionate nor angry complaints of them? It would be ſomething to Preſerve and keep our ſelves in this moderation towards them. But if we Conſult neverthleſs the Rule of Charity, we ſhall find that oftentimes we muſt proceed farther to be ſatisfied exactly therein. Becauſe ſometimes we have reaſon to think and conſider theſe Impreſſions as dangerous Diſeaſes for our Neighbour, and to judge at the ſame time, that there are none but we who can remedy it, or at leaſt that we can do it better than any one. Now in theſe two Circumſtances can we doubt that Charity obliges us not to do all that we can to deſtroy in them theſe preventions, be it in clearing them as to the Truth, be it in employing other means proper to give them other thoughts of us, or laſtly be it in avoiding all that may fortifie their preoccupations.

XV.

St. *Auſtin* teacheth theſe Maxims, and hath practiced them himſelf after an admirable manner. He looks upon theſe ſuſpicions againſt the Honour of his Neighbour of ſo great a concern, that he calls them a Poyſon able to make Souls to periſh. *It is to be wiſhed,* ſaith he, *that thoſe who have theſe thoughts, Witneſs publickly what they have in the* *Aug. Ep. 2. 23*

Heart, that all ſorts of Remedies may be employed, rather than ſuffer them to be loſt without knowing it, by the Poyſon of theſe pernicious doubts and ſuſpicions: Quamvis tacitè pereant perniciosis ſuſpicionibus venenati. He teacheth that we ought not to be contented with the teſtimony of our Conſcience, and that Charity which ſeeks not after her own intereſts, obliging to do good, not only before God, but alſo before Men, we ought rather to endeavour to perſuade them of the falſeneſs of their ſuſpicions, than to rebuke them, becauſe they make them appear. *Magis ſatagendum eſt quomodo perſuadeatur hominibus falſum eſſe quod ſuſpicantur, quam quomodo arguendi ſunt qui ſuſpiciones ſuas vocibus verbiſque declarant.*

The Principle of this Doctrine is contain'd in this other Maxim of this holy Doctor; *That, although he who diſdains the Practices of Men diſdains alſo their raſh ſuſpicions, yet if he be truly an honeſt man, he doth not diſdain their Salvation, becauſe he hath ſo much love for Juſtice, that he loves even his Enemies, and deſires to correct them, to the end he may have them for Companions of his happineſs.*

De Civitate Dei. l. 14. c. 19.

Finally, as it is clear that thoſe we ſuſpect unjuſtly are not more undeſerving our Charity than thoſe that injure us, we might apply to them what St. *Auſtin* ſaid of the Obligation thoſe, who have ſuffered ſome Injury, have to cure the Soul of what hath cauſed it. *This Man*, ſaith he, *hath injured you, and in injuring you he hath hurt himſelf mightily, and you ſlight this hurt of your Brothers. You ſee him periſh, and you care not if he periſh, your ſilence in this regard is more Criminal than the Injury which he hath done you.* Pejor es tacendo quam ille conviciando. *Injuries therefore done you muſt be forgotten, but forget not your Brothers hurt.*

Aug. Serm. 16. de verb. Dom. in Evan. *Mat.*

XVI.

XVI.

Theſe are the Rules eſtabliſhed by this holy Doctor, and he hath himſelf practiſed them on an important occaſion. For having been ſuſpected by *Albina*, an illuſtrious Roman Lady, to have contributed through Intereſt to the Oath *Pinian* made to the People of *Hyppo*, never to go out of their City, and to receive Ordination no where elſe. Inſtead of complaining of a ſuſpicion ſo ill grounded, he thought himſelf obliged to purge himſelf thereof by Oath, which he did with an edifying humility, without reproaching *Albina*, and without other Proſpect then to cure her of the Wounds ſhe had received by this ſuſpicion. *Sananda iſta in vobis, non accuſanda ſunt, & noſtra purganda vobis eſt Fama, ſi eſt Domino purgata Conſcientia.*

XVII.

This ſame Saint having rebuked ſomething too ſeverely, although without naming the Perſon, the error of a Biſhop who believed that God was Corporeal, and that he might be ſeen with Human Eyes, and this Biſhop being ſo troubled at it that he refuſed to ſee him, though he offered to beg his Pardon for the offence, ſuſpecting perchance that it was through Artifice that he ſhewed ſo much deſire to appeaſe him. St. *Auſtin*, inſtead of being ſtruck with this ſuſpicion, endeavoured only to mollifie this Biſhop, and to free him from this Impreſſion, and there is nothing more humble than the manner of his doing it. Firſt he condemned the harſhneſs of his words. *I have been*, ſaid he, *imprudent and laviſh in this reproach, and have not conſidered what I owe to my Brother and College in the Epiſcopacy; I am ſo far from vindicating my ſelf in this Point, that I Condemn my ſelf: I am ſo far from excuſing it, that I accuſe my ſelf of it. I beg I may be pardoned, and that this Offence may be concealed by the remembrance of our ancient Friend-*

ſhip. And to deſtroy the ſuſpicion which this Biſhop had of being ſlighted by him, and that it was by deceit that he ſought it, he deſired another Biſhop whom he took for a Mediator, to free him from theſe thoughts, *Aſſure him*, ſaid he, *of my ſincerity, and let him know with what ſentiments of grief I have ſpoken to you of his diſcontent, how far I am from detracting and contemning him, how much I fear God in his Perſon, and how much I look upon him our Head, in whoſe Body we are all Brothers.* Noverit quam eum non contemnam, & quantum in illo Deum timeam, & cogitem Caput noſtrum in ejus Corpore Fratres ſumus.

XVIII.

Behold what St. *Auſtin* believed was requiſite to be practiſed on occaſions where there is hopes of Curing other Mens ſuſpicions in giving them an account of their Conduct informing them of their true intentions. What if Men judge with cauſe that theſe kind of explications would be unuſeful, as it happens often enough; Charity ſhould then apply us to ſeek out other means to deſtroy theſe preventions, not becauſe they are hurtful, but becauſe they may hurt thoſe who have them. Thus inſtead of Complaints and Reproaches, which ſerve only to exaſperate Mens Minds, we ſhould try to ſhew them who are prejudiced againſt us, a quite contrary diſpoſition to that they lay to our Charge. If they think we have no eſteem nor affection for them, we ſhould endeavour to convince them by effective Proofs, that we love them, and that we eſteem them truly. If they imagin that we miſtruſt them, we ought to ſeek diligently ſome Means to give them Marks of Truſt: If they ſuſpect us for ſome fault which we are not guilty of, we ſhould labour to take away by little and little this Impreſſion from them, by avoiding what may either entertain and augment it, and by dealing with them in ſuch a manner as is capable to deſtroy it; and by this Means we ſhall be ſo far from being hurt

by

by theſe Suſpicions, that they give us Means to correct our ſelves of divers Faults, and to enrich our ſelves by the practice of many Vertues.

XIX.

There would be often times likewiſe no need to diſſipate theſe ſuſpicions by an application ſo expreſs. It would be ſufficient to diſſemble them, and to continue acting as accuſtomed with thoſe who are addicted to them, without telling them we perceive them. The uniformity of our Conduct and Behaviour would conſume them by little and little; and their Minds would find they were changed, even without being aware thereof. But our impatiency ſpoils all; we cannot expect the ſlow Remedies; we would carry the Minds away by force, that is to ſay, we would make them act againſt their nature.

XX.

Although a Man have hurt himſelf by his own fault, though he have by the diſorderlineſs of his living, made himſelf ſick, no Man pretends to cure him of his Wounds and Diſeaſes by reproaching him; we muſt have recourſe to the Remedies proper for his Diſtemper; and not wonder that they act only with time. Now we ought not to diſtinguiſh in this caſe the Diſeaſes of the Mind from thoſe of the Body. How voluntary ſoever they may be, they are not for all that, leſs durable, nor leſs obſtinate. He knows the nature of Mans Mind but badly, who thinks, that when it is once prepoſſeſſed, that Self-love hath an intereſt in an Opinion, that there is formed an inclination in the Heart to judge in a certain manner, we are able to blot out in a ſhort time, all theſe Impreſſions. It is neceſſary to change this ſentiment, that the Mind get new Lights, that it be familiar therein, that it looſe a certain diſtruſt, which the Opinions wherewith it is prepoſſeſſed, give it of all that's con-

contrary thereunto; that Self-love accuſtom it ſelf by little and little; to ſuffer the reproach of being deceived, and that it forget in ſome ſort, that it had taken another part. All this has need of time, and 'tis ridiculous to pretend, that becauſe ſome ſuſpicions relate to us, that we ought out of hand to rid our ſelves of them, and that Mens Minds ought to act in our conſideration in an extraordinary manner.

XXI.

Perhaps there may be more evil in this niceneſs, which makes us ſuffer with ſo much impatience, the unjuſt ſuſpicions Men conceive of us, than there are in theſe ſuſpicions, whereof we complain. We judge of others, according to our underſtanding, and thoſe who have but little, judge ſometimes ill enough, their Hearts for all that, not conſenting not much thereunto. Oftentimes they have Charity for thoſe they condemn unjuſtly, and and would be very willing to obſerve them. Whereas this impatience which we experience in the evil judgments Men make of us, is a fault which certainly comes from the depravity of the Heart, and from the pride whereof it is full.

What do we know but God will permit ſometime, that Men judge of us little favourably, and that they ſuſpect us wrongfully, to make us more ſenſible of this Wound, and to give us means to heal it? What do we know alſo, but that he hath annexed our Salvation to the uſe of this Means? Thus in complaining of it, we complain in reality of a favourable Remedy God offers us. We oppoſe the Deſigns of his Mercy towards us; we contemn his Favours, and we refuſe to enter into the way of Salvation.

The

The Seventh Treatiſe.

That we ought not to be Scandalized at Good Mens Faults.

Beatus qui non fuerit ſcandalizatus me.

I.

WHen Jeſus Chriſt ſaid, *Bleſſed is he who ſhall not be ſcandalized in me*, he gave us to underſtand by this Expreſſion, that 'tis a Happineſs very rare to be free from this Scandal, and by conſequence that 'tis a Miſery very frequent to fall into it. Now if it be true, that the number of theſe Happy Men be ſmall, and the number of theſe Miſerable Creatures great, we have all a great intereſt to inſtruct our ſelves, what it is to be ſcandalized in Jeſus Chriſt; and of the extent of this Word, ſeeing that we would all be of that ſmall number of theſe Bleſſed, and not of the great number of the Miſerable.

II.

Jeſus Chriſt is properly a Subject of Scandal to thoſe who know him not, and he is unknown to Men only, becauſe he is hidden from them. We ſtumble not againſt a Stone, but only becauſe we ſee it not; We hurt

hurt not our ſelves againſt Jeſus Chriſt, but becauſe we know not what he is. Thus to be ſcandalized at Jeſus Chriſt, is not to know him, and to contemn him through blindneſs and ignorance. That which hides Jeſus Chriſt from us is therefore that which makes Jeſus Chriſt an occaſion of ſcandal to us. Now there are many things that hid him from Men.

III.

His Meanneſs, his Poverty, his Sufferings, and all the Marks of his Infirmity have hid him from the Jews. They could not believe that this *Meſſias*, whom they imagined to themſelves, ought to be environed round about with Pomp and Glory, could be that Miſerable Man they ſaw amongſt them, and who was not diſtinguiſhed from other Men by any exterior Luſtre. They could not imagine that Man whom they had crucified, was the Author himſelf of Life, and therefore St. *Paul* calls the Croſs, *The Jews Scandal.* Judæis Scandalum.

IV.

But they are not only the Jews who are ſcandalized at the weakneſs of Jeſus Chriſt. This Scandal comprehends generally all thoſe who love the World. All thoſe, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, who love what Jeſus Chriſt diſdained, and who hate what he loved, deſpiſe Jeſus Chriſt. For is it not to diſdain his Wiſdom to judge of things quite otherwiſe than he doth, and to chuſe quite contrary to him, to think that a Good, which he believed an Evil, and an Evil what he thought a Good? Now to diſdain the Wiſdom of Jeſus Chriſt, is to diſdain Jeſus Chriſt, and to be ſcandalized at him.

V.

O how great is this Scandal, and how common! For how few are there who are exempt? How few who eſteem not Men leſs when clad with the Liveries of Jeſus Chriſt, that is to ſay, with his Poverty, and who inwardly honour them not more, becauſe they were thoſe of his Enemies, which are the Pomps of the World, which St. *Auſtin*, with reaſon, calls the Devils raggs,

Pannos

pannos Diaboli. What are Princes Courts, or rather what is the World, but a place where it is a ſhameful thing to imitate *Jeſus Chriſt?*

VI.

But yet we may not fall into this Scandal, which is only proper to thoſe who are poſſeſſed with Worldly Love. We may nevertheleſs ſay, that there are few amongſt the Juſt themſelves, who participate of this Happineſs, of not being ſcandaliz'd at Jeſus Chriſt, not only becauſe they have not always ſome inclination for things which Jeſus Chriſt hath diſdain'd; but alſo becauſe they are ſcandaliz'd at him many other ways, which are neceſſary to be conſider'd.

VII.

Not to be ſcandaliz'd at Jeſus Chriſt, we ought to know him, and to know him, we ought to underſtand him entirely. Now Jeſus Chriſt entirely is not only the Head, but alſo the Members. He lives in them, he is hidden in them. Thus we take another for him when we deſpiſe him in his Members wherein he is hid.

VIII.

It is much eaſier to contemn Jeſus Chriſt in his Members then in himſelf, becauſe there he is more hidden. He was not private in the World, but by meanneſs of Nature, but he is often private in the Faithful by many faults, which Jeſus hath not had, and alſo by many Faults, which rob us ſometimes of the Splendor and the Odour of their Virtue, and make us ſuſpect that they had nothing in them but Humane, And as this ſcandal is very dangerous, we muſt embrace all ways imaginable to ſhun it.

IX. One

IX.

One of the Principal ways is, to comprehend well with what conditions Jesus Christ is hid in the Faithful. We must know for that, that this Divine Kingdom, which he came to establish in this World, is an interior Kingdom, *Regnum Dei intra vos est.* He is hid in the bottom of the Soul; where God resides with the [illegible] his Grace, without shewing often any splendor outwardly. A Soul by the Possession of this Kingdom, becomes the Object of God's Pleasure: she becomes his Throne and Temple. The Angels who know him, discover therein all these grandeurs. But Men discover them only by certain obscure Lights, which make them appear in their actions, and in the conduct of their Lives, all the rest is darkned by the Infirmity of the Flesh.

X.

This Obscurity wherewith God covers in the World the Treasures of Grace, which he puts into Souls, produceth great Good, and great Harm, according to the good or bad use is made thereof. 'Tis one of the great means by which God exercises in the World his Mercy and Justice. It hinders on the one part, that the Just exalt not themselves, nor lose themselves by the Sight and Knowledge of their proper Excellence, and it delivers them on the other part from the tentation which might be caused in them, by the esteem and admiration of Men who should know them. It conserves them in the way of Faith, in depriving them of the Sight of one thing which would draw them from it by motives too Humane. For if S. *Austin* say, that God hath not been willing that the renewing which Grace produceth in our Souls should extend it self, even to the Body, by conferring immortality to it, lest the hope we ought to have

Aug. de Civit. l. 15. c. 4.

have in him, ſhould be too intereſſed; If this ſame Saint aſcertain, that it is by the ſame Reaſon that he permits the Juſt to be afflicted in this World, as well as the Wicked, for fear we ſhould aim in the Services which we render to God, to exempt our ſelves from temporal Evils; We may likewiſe ſay, That he permits us not to ſee the excellence of a Juſt Souls beauty, and the horrible Deformity of a Soul in ſin, leſt it ſhould be through theſe intereſſed Motives, that we ſhould deſire juſtice, and have a Horror for ſin.

XI.

But if this Obſcurity produce ſome good in reſpect of ſome, it may be ſaid, that it produces very great Evils in reſpect of others, and that 'tis the principal Cauſe of Wicked Mens blindneſs. For 'tis that makes Worldly People believe, that there is nothing in Men worthy of Eſteem, but what flatters their Senſes, and contemn moſt part of Honeſt and Good Men, not ſeeing in them what they love. What is told them of the good of the Soul, they look upon it as a meer Imagination, becauſe they neither perceive nor ſee it. Thus they diſtinguiſh Men only by the outward Qualities, and by the relation they have to their Paſſions; and as Virtuous Men participate always of the Spirit of the World, they participate alſo a little of this Illuſion. The two great tyes they have of outward qualities, take from them the Sentiment of the Spiritual Miſery of many Souls; and often alſo they have not the eſteem they ought to have of the real good others poſſeſs, becauſe they are covered with outward Faults, of which they are too ſenſible. This is one of the moſt ordinary means, whereby Jeſus Chriſt is ſcandalized in his Members. For as the Jews would that their *Meſſias* ſhould be environ'd with rays of Glory, we would alſo that honeſt Men ſhould have no defect, neither inwardly nor outwardly; and unleſs they have this agreeableneſs which ſtrikes our Senſes, we have

a Propenſity to condem them, as ſeeing their Faults and their Miſeries, but not their Riches and their Goods.

XII.

This Scandal increaſes infinitely, when theſe Faults Faults, which we obſerve in them, are not ſimple natural but Faults of Manners, and true and abſolute Faults. For if we only need to beg of God to preſerve us from the tentation which ſprings from thence; there is danger that theſe Faults which we ſee in thoſe, who paſs for Pious Men, do humble and debaſe them ſo in our ſight, that we deprive our ſelves of the Edification, which we might draw from all the other Virtues which we obſerve in them. Oftentimes theſe Virtues are ſuſpected by us; we begin to apprehend that we have been deceived. We know not what to ſtick to, and we enter into a certain Deſpair of finding in the World ſolid Virtues.

XIII.

This Tentation is at the ſame time very dangerous, and very ordinary. For it is a hard thing to live long with pious People, but we ſhall find in them many Faults, not only Imaginary, but true and real ones. Humane Wit never hides it ſelf abſolutely. They ſuffer themſelves to be cheated and beguiled. They are carried away by unjuſt prejudices: They are ſometimes precipitate in their Judgments. We ſee ſome who are reſolved in their Thoughts, others who are curious and delicate in what concerns them nearly: Others who are tender and nice in ſmall Inconveniences. There are ſome that their Zeal carries to exceſſes. Laſtly, There are almoſt none in whom Nature ſhews not her ſelf by many ways. But if Men thereupon are inclined to condemn them, they come to condemn all the World, and to paſs from averſion for Faults, to averſion

ſion for Men, according to this ſaying of an antient Perſon. *Qui vitic odit, homines odit.*

XIV.

'Tis good therefore to fortifie our ſelves againſt this Tentation by Conſiderations, which may be found in Faith. Now Faith furniſhes us with what may be able to diſſipate this Tentation, if we apply our ſelves ſeriouſly to it. For Faith ſhews us that the Faults of the Juſt are profitable to them in divers manners, as hath already been ſaid, and likewiſe, that oftentimes God permits them more for others than for themſelves. He darkens their ſplendor, that thoſe who deſerve not to enjoy it, may be deprived of it. He takes from before our Eyes, their good examples, to puniſh us for not having profited by them; He holds back the odor of their Piety, becauſe the World hath not received it as it ought.

XV.

We are ſcandalized then often at certain Faults in Juſt Men, which are not ſo much for them as for us. They hurt them not, but they hurt us; they are Thorns which are good for them, becauſe they warrant their Piety from the danger it would be in of being wither'd by Mens Praiſes; but theſe Thorns wounding us, hinder us from approaching, and from perceiving the good ſmell of them. And thus there are none but we who loſe thereby.

XVI.

Juſt Mens Faults enter into the Order of Providence, and often God makes uſe of them to execute his greateſt deſigns againſt the Wicked. Poſſibly S. *Chryſoſtome* might have dealt better with *Arcadia* and *Eudoxia*; and that if he had done ſo, they had not abandoned him

to the fury of *Theophilus*: But becauſe *Theophilus*, and the Wicked Biſhops of that time deſerved to be abandon'd to their Paſſions, and blinded by a Succeſs, conform to their deſigns; God did permit this Saint to follow the heat of his Zeal.

XVII.

There are Virtuous Men, who examining the Life of S. *Thomas* of *Canterbury*, were perſuaded to believe that he might, without violating the Laws of the Church, have yielded to many things, which King *Henry* the Second deſir'd of him; yet the Heart of this Holy Biſhop being right, and the Heart of King *Henry* corrupted, the Proceedings of this Saint being Humble and Juſt, the King's Proceedings Violent and Unjuſt, God rather judg'd of this Difference by the Purity of the Saint's Heart, and the Wickedneſs of his Adverſary, than by the bottom of the Cauſe, and did not omit to juſtifie him by many Miracles, when the whole Church was divided upon his ſcore.

XVIII.

The Cardinal of *Arles* was Author of an Enterprize which cauſed great troubles, which was the Depoſing of *Eugenius* IV. This action was not followed in the Church. It is no where obſerved that he repented the Act; and yet he hath done Miracles after his Death, God having not laid to his Charge what he did through Zeal of Juſtice, though in ſome circumſtances which render'd his action imprudent. S. *Peter* of *Luxemburg*, S. *Vincent Ferrier*, S. *Catherine* of *Siena*, were in divers and different times of Schiſm, and by conſequence ſome of them for the Anti-Pope; yet nevertheleſs this blemiſh hath not hinder'd their Sanctity.

XIX. They

XIX.

They who write the Lives of Saints, think that 'tis their Duty to ſet forth all their Virtues, and to hide all their Faults. But I do not know if they ſhould not do as well to take notice of all their Faults, as of their Virtues, to hinder thereby, that Men be not ſcandaliz'd at ſuch as appear in ſome Pious Men which we know. Whoſoever for example, ſhall make reflections on the manner how three Saints, to wit, S. *Epiphanius*, S. *Jerom*, and S. *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, acted upon account of S. *John Chryſoſtom*, will wonder no more that Virtuous Men be ſometimes prevented, and fall ſometimes into exceſs, and they will conceive, that there is very great limitation in this Paſſage. *Charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum.*

XX.

We ſee often in Saints ſome Faults which God ſees no more there; whereas we ſee not in our ſelves, thoſe which are truly there. If they commit Faults through ignorance, the heat of their Charity purifies them, even without their acknowledging them, and thus they ſubſiſt no more. If they commit ſome through weakneſs, or through ſome Paſſion, they humble themſelves, and they riſe again more ſtrong than they were before their fall, and by this means again they ſubſiſt no more. But the Faults of Souls grown cold, although more inconſiderable in appearance, ſubſiſt always in the Eyes of God, becauſe they want this fire of Charity to conſume them, and becauſe they are not reſtor'd again abſolutely.

XXI.

We muſt diſtinguiſh Faults of Paſſion from Faults of Darkneſs, and Faults of Light; the Faults of Un-

derſtanding, from Faults of the Heart: Nor is there properly any but God who can judge of Faults which ſpring from Ignorance, wherein Cupidity appears not to have ony ſhare at all: Nor is it permitted for Men to determine of the Degree.

XXII.

All Saints have in their hearts a ſincere Diſpoſition to love, and follow every known Truth. But they know not equally all Truths, neither are they equally appropriated to all thoſe they know. God enlightens and touches them differently, according to the ſeveral deſigns he hath upon them, and by giving them an ardent Love for certain Truths, by which he will ſanctify them; he ſuffers ſometimes that in reſpect of others they remain in ſome kind of Obſcurity, or in a want of Judgment; which comes not from the Corruption of their Hearts, but from this, that God applies them to other things. 'Tis this that makes theſe who love theſe Truths, to be oftentimes troubled to ſee them ſo little concerned for them, becauſe they conſider not that they themſelves are in this Deprivation of Light and Judgment, in regard of many others, and that the Heart of Man being limited, and narrow in the condition it is in, as to this Life, God doth not exact, that it ſhould love Truth, Truth in all its extent, but only that it be the love of Truth, and not Cupidity, which ſhould be the Principle of its actions.

XXIII.

When God leaves the Saints thus in Ignorance, as to many Truths, or diverts and ſtops the occaſions, which might engage them to commit ſome Faults thrô Ignorance, or hides by the Purity of their Hearts, and by the Ardency of their Charity, thoſe which they commit, it happens nevertheleſs from hence, that we may eaſily make ill uſe of their Examples, whether it be

be in imagining that we ought to follow blindly all they have done, or in behaving our ſelves, ſo as to condemn theſe Saints, becauſe of theſe wants of Light. But both the one and the other of theſe Scandals muſt be remedied by the Conſideration of this various Diſpenſation which God makes of the Knowledge of this Truth. For we ſee by this on the one ſide, that there may remain darkneſs in the Saints, in reſpect of certain points, in which by conſequence they ought not to be taken for Guides; and we have reaſon to conclude on the other, that it follows not, that thoſe in whom we perceive the wants of Light, in reſpect of certain Truths, cannot be Saints by the application they have to others.

XXIV.

We may add to this, that perchance thoſe who hurt in appearance certain Truths through Ignorance, and lack of Light; have before God, more love and Zeal for them, than theſe who ſhew a great heat for thoſe ſame Truths. For God hath particularly regard to the bottom of the Heart, and when he ſees there a ſincere love for Truth and Juſtice, a Diſpoſition to follow them at the coſt of all things, he hath leſs regard to the Darkneſs, which hinders this Love to ſpread it over certain particular points. Whereas it happens ſometimes, that this Zeal, ſo apparent for certain Truths, is nothing but the effect of Self-love, and a tye to its proper ſenſe. We maintain Truth, as we ſhould maintain what is Falſe, if we had the ſame Engagements to do it; and oftentimes God ſees no thing that's ſincere at the bottom of the Heart, which leads directly to Truth.

XXV.

Thoſe who by a more exact ſtudy of Antiquity, ſhould have acquired knowledge and ſome light, which

very Holy Persons should not have had, should yet have occasion to humble themselves by this Thought; that those Truths, though great and important, are not ordinarily those, the Practice whereof is most frequent, and which are the Principal of the common actions which compose our lives. Thus as the occasion of practising them are not very ordinary, they become often barren in these who know them, and we may easily believe, that Men love them without any real or effective love for them. It is altogether contrary with common Truths, as with those which teach to converse with our Neighbour, in an edifying manner, to have God present in all our actions, and to do nothing but by his Motive and his Spirit, to mortifie all the inordinate excesses of Self-love, to lop off all things useless to this Life. to correct the Senses in all that we can, to moderate our Passions, to govern all the motions of Mind and Body, not to complain of little Evils, to receive favourably those who mind us of some defect, not to be tyed to our own Sense and Light; to be reserved in our Judgments. Those Truths which prescribe these actions, are not less Truths than the others, whereof we have spoken, but they have this advantage, that the Practice is ordinary, and that we scarcely flatter our selves with loving them, without we love them truly. These are those which all the Saints have known, and 'tis in practising them, and loving them, that they are become Saints. Whereas it happens, that those who are more knowing in these Truths less frequent, and which serve only as Rules to great Actions, apply themselves much less to these common Truths, whose continual practice is the True source of the Sanctification of Souls, and of the Edification we give to those who are witnesses of our actions.

XXVI.

Nevertheless, it happens some times, that Persons who appear very Exact and very Edifying in their common

common actions, are ſunk down in great buſineſſes, for having neglected to ſearch the Lights which were neceſſary for them to march therein, or through other ſecret reaſons, which God knows, and that others on the contrary, whoſe Lives indeed were leſs exact, and ſtuft more with ſmall faults, ſhew great Courage and Force in thoſe occaſions of importance, and ſhew alſo, that they had at the bottom of the Heart, a ſolid and true love for God. And that's it which ought to humble in their turn, thoſe who are more outwardly and orderly and more compoſed, becauſe they know not for all that, what their force is, and that perchance they are with all this outward Regularity, weaker and more imperfect before God, than thoſe whoſe imperfections ſtrike more upon the Eyes of the World. So great a care hath God to keep in this Life, all things in obſcurity and uncertainty, to take from us all right of magnifying our ſelves in our ſelves, and contemning others.

The Eighth Treatiſe.

The means of Profiting by bad Sermons.

I.

WE cannot avoid ſometimes hearing bad Sermons. For beſides that we know not all the bad Preachers, and that 'tis not juſt to avoid them until we know them. The Preachers themſelves are not alike in Preaching, either always Good, or always Bad; and that thus in ſeeking out a Good Sermon, we oftentimes find a very Bad one. Methinks a Pious Perſon cannot diſpenſe with himſelf, from hearing Preachers, whatever they be. Becauſe Sermons in general being neceſſary for the Church, and God having choſen this way for the Inſtruction of his People, it is requiſite, that they whoſe Piety ſerves for a Rule to others, contribute to cauſe this Miniſtry to ſubſiſt, in giving the Example to render themſelves aſſiduous in publick Inſtructions. Otherwiſe if through a Judgment which they might make of the Preachers, they did perſuade the People to diſpenſe with the Hearing them, this Miniſtry would by little and little be laid aſide, and the ſimple Poor Peo-

ple

ple would find themſelves thereby deprived of the principal Means which God hath given them to be inſtructed with the neceſſary Truths for their Salvation.

II.

But that they may not ordain only this Action to the Edification of others, and that they may profit alſo thereby themſelves, their Piety ought to apply them to find ſome means whereby they may profit by all ſorts of Sermons: and ſeeing that 'tis not in their Power to cauſe, that all thoſe who engage themſelves to Preach, acquit themſelves of this Miniſtry as they ought, they ought to labour to acquit themſelves as they ſhould of that Duty of hearing Sermons, which is another function, having likewiſe its Obligations, and by conſequence its Rules.

III.

We ſee at firſt, that the ſeeking out of theſe Means, and of theſe Rules, ought to conſiſt in finding out Holy Inventions, whereby to edify our ſelves by bad Sermons. For there needs no method to gain by good ones. Every one knows, that he ought to open his Heart to ſolid Truths, which are declared to him therein; that he ought to beg Grace of God, that they increaſe as Divine Seed; that he ought to conſerve them in his Memory as a Precious Treaſure; that he muſt act in ſuch ſort, that weighing them often in his Mind, they may take root, and ſpread themſelves there; and that laſtly, he muſt ſeek occaſions to reduce them into Practice.

IV.

We know yet, that we ought not to place in the number of bad Sermons, thoſe, wherein Truths, otherwiſe Solid and Edifying, ſhould be propoſed after a Groſs and unpleaſing Manner; wherein the Preacher ſhould

ſhould have but a little Talent, little of outward Addreſs, little of Facility to expreſs himſelf. For provided, that the Subject be good, it is requiſite that a judicious Auditor fix himſelf thereto, and that he make uſe of it to cover the outward Defects.

V.

It ought to be the ſame, when that which ſtumbles us in a Preacher, is nothing but the little Relation of his Thoughts to the matter. For provided, that the Truths be Good and Profitable in themſelves, what imports it, that the Relation of it be ſo juſt? But I would gladly, ſays one, that they had been propoſed to us in another application. Well, ſeparate them from this Application which ſtumbles you, and conſider them in themſelves, or make you another Application of them. 'Tis always to oblige you, to have given you means to be attentive to theſe Truths. They deſerve very well to be attentively conſider'd for themſelves.

VI.

But there are Sermons which are defective, even at the bottom, and which are only made up of Words, which have more of ſound than of Senſe in them. There are ſome wherein are diſtributed only ſhallow ſpeculations, and unſolid Thoughts: which leave the Soul in Want and Hunger, whereto we can add nothing for the Correction of her manners, and wherein the People comprehend as little, as if they were made or Preached in an unknown Language. There are ſome likewiſe, wherein the Preachers diſſemble or weaken the Truth by a criminal Cowardiſe or Baſeneſs, or alter it through Ignorance or Intereſt.

As 'tis impoſſible that thoſe who have a little Light, ſhould not acknowledge theſe Faults, we ought not to force them that they ſhould diſſemble them to themſelves, but only that they extol not and magnifie them:

On

On the contrary, it is good that they endeavour to comprize the Greatneſs of the Exceſſes which are committed in this Point, and that they lament before God for ſo unworthy a Manner, wherein Truth is handled by Men. For this Holy lamentation conducing to Piety, all that excites it is profitable to them, and contributes to their Edification.

VII.

In conſidering with this Spirit, the Outrages done to Jeſus Chriſt, in the Diſpenſation of his Word, they will find that they are not leſs, than thoſe he received in the Diſtributing his of Body; and that it may be ſaid likewiſe, that they are greater, and that thus they ought to be to us a greater Cauſe of Grief, Humiliation, and Terror. For although there may be many Criminal and Vicious Prieſts, who inſinuate themſelves to the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments and the Diſtribution of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt; there is nothing more rare than to find of them impious enough to give to the Faithful Unconſecrated Hoſts inſtead of the Body it ſelf of *Jeſus Chriſt*, or to mingle Poyſon with Conſecrated Hoſts, that thereby they might kill the Bodies of thoſe who receive them.

Thus althô the Wicked Prieſts commit a Sacriledge through the boldneſs they have of inſinuating themſelves into ſo Divine Functions; thoſe nevertheleſs who participate of the Body of *Jeſus Chriſt* by their Miniſtry, receive no prejudice thereby. 'Tis not the ſame with the Word of God. For there are not only ſome Prieſts who diſhonour it by preſuming to Preach it, when they ought to think of nothing more than doing Penance for their Crimes, and who draw upon themſelves thereby the Reproach which God makes them in theſe Words of the Kingly Prophet, *Peccatori autem dixit Deus, quare tu enarras Juſtitias meas, & aſſumis Teſtamentum meum per Os tuum?* But there are thoſe who poyſon it by their bad Maxims, or by their Paſſions, and they who do this, inſtead of giving life to Souls, bring often

often Death. And laſtly, There are ſome, who, inſtead of the true Word of God, diſtribute only their Imaginations, which is not hurtful only to the Ignorant in depriving them of the Nouriſhment they have need of, but deceives them wickedly by ſuffering them to receive, as the Word of God, thoughts altogether Humane and Profane.

VIII.

We need not only apply theſe Conſiderations to the preſent State of the Church, to acknowledge that there are a great Number of Chriſtians that ſuffer what the Scripture calls *Famem Verbi*, The deſire of God's Word, becauſe thoſe who are charged with this Inſtruction, inſtead of ſolid Truths drawn from this Word, wherewith they ought to nouriſh them, feed them only with their own proper Thoughts and Vain Speculations; and that thence it is, that the Church experiences in many places this terrible Wound wherewith God has at other times threatned to ſtrike the *Jews*, which the ſame Scripture calls *Ubera Arentia*, The Breaſts giving no Milk; that is to ſay, Paſtors without Light, and incapable of nouriſhing their People with the Doctrine of Truth; which at the ſame time ought to ſtir up in us ſentiments of Compaſſion for the Spiritual Miſery of ſo many Souls, motives of ackowledgment, that God hath treated us more favourably than them, in giving us the Knowledge of his Truth, which he ſuffers them to be deprived of, and a wholeſome Fright through the Conſideration of the little uſe we have made of all theſe helps.

IX.

If theſe Sermons which pleaſe us ſo little of themſelves, did make us enter into theſe Sentiments, they would alſo become as profitable to us as thoſe which fill our Memories the moſt with edifying Truths. There are hardly any of more importance than thoſe which may be learnt by the Chaſtiſement which God exerciſes upon

upon the Church. For he ſhews, that the Knowledge of Truth is not due to us, that we deſerve to be deprived of it; That this Deprivation is the Juſt puniſhment of our Diſorders; That we ought to impute to our ſelves this want of Evangelical Preachers; That thus the Faults they commit in the Exerciſe of their Miniſtry, are in ſome ſort ours, ſeeing that 'tis to puniſh us, that God permits them.

X.

We muſt not imagine, that we have no reaſon to fear, as to our ſelves, the effects of God's Wrath, under pretence that we are better inſtructed, and that we have divers ways to ſupply the Defects of Preachers. For God hath alſo other ſorts of blindneſſes to ſpread over us, which we ought not to apprehend leſs. If he puniſh us not by depriving us of the Knowledge of ſome particular Duty in ſome important Occaſions, and this Deprivation is enough to make us enter into ſome unlucky engagements, and render all our other Knowledges unuſeful. We have not therefore leſs need of his Light, nor leſs Obligation to ſeek it. And as this Light is communicated in the ordinary way by the Miniſtry of Men; no Man can ſay, he hath not need of a Preacher, that is, of a Man who makes him Underſtand what God requires from him.

XI.

But there is no need that this Conſideration of the Diſorders, which are committed in the Diſpenſation of God's Word, as well as in the Diſtributing the Body of Jeſus Chriſt, apply us only to the Conſideration of his Juſtice towards the Wicked; it ought to fill us yet more with the Admiration of his Bounty towards the Elect. For 'tis for them that he ſuffers all thoſe Prophanations, with an incomprehenſible patience. 'Tis for them he commands, that his Body reſide even to the end of the World upon our Altars, and that it enter into the Mouths of all thoſe who would receive him

him without having regard to the Sacrileges that ſo many impious People commit in receiving it, to the end, that his Choſen may not be deprived of this Divine Nouriſhment, which is the ordinary means of their Salvation. Hence it happens ſometimes, that the Body of Jeſus Chriſt remains whole years in the Churches, in the hands of Wicked Prieſts, who diſhonour it every day by new Impieties, and receives thereby abundance of outrages on the ſcore of diſorderly Chriſtians, to the end, that ſome poor Woman may have the Means to partake thereof, or to come and adore it. 'Tis alſo ſometimes not there for thoſe who compaſs this Particular Church, becauſe they may be all Impious and Wicked. It is there for thoſe who ſhall ſpring from them long after. It is alſo in conſideration of his Elect, that he ſuffers that ſome Wicked Men Corrupt and Prophane his Word in declaring it, and that he permits that Men preach it to People, who draw no profit from it, and who become only more Criminal thereby, to the end, that ſome ſimple Souls, who ſhall be there preſent, may be inſtructed, and edified with it; or at leaſt, that the Miniſtry being conſerved, ſome of the Choſen, who perhaps ſhall be many years after, may find in theſe places, inſtructions they may have need of.

As Piety then ought to make us adore the infinite Charity of Jeſus Chriſt, reſiding upon our Altars, and ſuffering for the good of his Elect, all the Outrages which he received there, it ought not to incline us leſs to adore this ſame Charity, which makes him endure the moſt ſcornful manner, wherewith Truth is Treated, whether in pronouncing or in hearing it. And it is very juſt to conclude, that it would be the heighth of Ingratitude, not to expoſe our ſelves for the Intereſt of Truth to receive ſome evil uſage on the Score of Men, ſeeing that God ſuffers every day, that this Truth be expoſed to ſo many diſdains, and to ſo many irreverences for our good.

XII. Never-

XII.

Nevertheleſs, great care muſt be taken to keep this Conſideration of Faults committed by thoſe who pronounce the Word of God within its juſt limits, leſt it ſhould carry us too far; and that as there appears little Light, little Unction, and often little Judgment in certain Sermons, it makes us not conclude, that the Preacher is abſolutely unprovided of all thoſe qualities. For this Judgment may be ill-grounded. There are ſome Perſons who preach very ill, and who nevertheleſs have Piety, and alſo Light and Judgment in other things; and the reaſon thereof is, that they Preach ill, becauſe they have a falſe Idea, and that they have at firſt propoſed evil Models. They apprehend, I know not how, that Sermons ought to have ſomething that's Excellent, Sublime, and Extraordinary; and that Common and Popular Thoughts are to be avoided therein. Thus when they are to Preach, they neither conſult the Heart, nor the Diſpoſition of their Auditors; they skip into a certain Region of their Mind, where moſt commonly they inhabit not, and where they have a Magazine of falſe Thoughts, and ſhallow Speculations, which this falſe Idea wherewith they are pre-occupied makes them approve. But as there Judgment is only ſpoil'd in this Place, they forbear not to be judicious in other Things, when they leave the Pulpit, where they are in ſome ſort in a violent State and Condition, and are returned to their ordinary manner of Speaking and Thinking.

XIII.

After we ſhall have practiſed this Equity towards the Preacher, and reſolved to manage him as well as we ſhall be able in what ſhall be ſaid before others, for fear of hindring the Fruit he might make upon thoſe who ſhould have other Conſiderations, than we. We ſhall be forced to conſider all that he ſays, and endeavour to find therein ſomething which may be able to edifie us, and whereunto we may fix our Minds; and it is very hard if we profper not therein, if we do it faithfully;

fully; or that we have not at leaſt reaſon to be be convinced, that 'tis our lack of Light and Virtue, which hinders us from profiting thereby.

XIV.

We deſire always, that all Sermons ſhould contain ſome brave Principle of Morality well expreſſed, and well explicated, that they may make us obſerve ſome conſiderable defect in the Lives of Chriſtians, that they may make us prone to practiſe ſome Important Obligation; and indeed, it were to be wiſh'd that they were ſuch; and 'tis a Defect when that is not; becauſe Preachers ought to imagine that the Vulgar People are ſcarcely Edified without theſe kind of Sermons, which made S. *Francis* of *Sales* ſay, *That he did not find that a Sermon was good, if the Preacher had not for his Mark the Building ſome Corner of the Walls of* Jeruſalem. Nevertheleſs, we ought to acknowledge, that 'tis alſo a Fault to have ſo ſtrict a Piety. Chriſtian Virtue has a larger Extent. It is not always buſied with the Correction of our Manners, nor with the Care of inſtructing or teaching Chriſtian Principles. It is forgetful ſometimes of it ſelf, that it may be raiſed abſolutely to God, to admire him, to praiſe him, to conſider his Myſteries in themſelves without any reflection upon it ſelf, to Contemplate the Works of his Mercy and Juſtice, to rejoyce at the Graces he hath beſtowed on the Saints. Now there are no Sermons which are not able to ſtir up in us ſome of theſe Motives, if we were diſpoſed thereto, and if our Minds were not ſo limited as not to ſearch occaſions of Edification but of a certain Kind, which makes that oftentimes we find as few to edifie themſelves by certain Sermons of the Fathers, as by thoſe we hear now a days.

XV.

We flatter our ſelves ordinarily with being of the Number of thoſe, whom S. *Auſtin* calls *non Verborum, ſed Rerum avidos*, greedy of Things, but not of Words; and we imagine, that 'tis this which diſpleaſes us in Sermons

mons where there are more Words than Things. Nevertheleſs, we may ſay, that this diſguſt comes rather from a contrary defect, that is to ſay, for that we are more fixed to the Manners and Ways, than to the Things themſelves, and that we love the Rarity, the Excellency, and the Aptneſs of Thoughts, better than their Solidity and Truth. For laſtly, there are no Sermons ſo bad where there is not ſomething of Truth; but they touch us not at all, becauſe they are either common or out of their place, or ill expreſſed, or that they are mingled with falſe Thoughts, or they miſs the Subject. So ſeeing all theſe Faults joyned to Truth take the reliſh of it abſolutely away, we muſt needs have but little love for it. A Diamond caſt into the Dirt, loſes not its luſter nor its price in regard of us; we take great care to dig it out when we diſcover it, and often apply our ſelves thereto ſo much the more as we find it in a Place that ſeems to diſhonour it. We ſhould make as much of this Pittance of Chriſtian Truths, which is found in certain Sermons, it would be juſt that we apply our ſelves thereunto, with ſo much more attention, that our Spirits might not be diſtracted by a great Number of things which might deſerve application. Now there is no Chriſtian Truth conſider'd as it ought, that is not capable to comfort us, and likewiſe there is not any which will not appear to have a very large extent if we have light enough to penetrate what it includes.

XVI.

We ought to conſider well, that theſe Common Truths which we hear with diſguſt, are infinitely above all that can be found in the Books of Paganiſm, which Men read with ſo much eſteem, and ſo much pleaſure; That 'tis a particular Grace that God has done us to have been pleaſed to diſcover them to us, having kept them hid four thouſand years from all Men; that the Prophets themſelves, and the Saints of the Old Teſtament, have ſighed to know them in this Excellency with which they are revealed to us; That they make

up part of thoſe Judgments which *David* ſpoke of with ſo much ſenſe of acknowledgment. *Non fecit taliter omni Nationi, & Judicia ſua non manifeſtavit eis.* And this may ſuffice to give us Confuſion, that ſome Humane defects with which they are environ'd, may make us loſe entirely the Guſt and Love for them.

XVII.

As S. *Auguſtin* ſays, That Men diſcern Beauty and Juſtice better when they obſerve them in Objects, which have nothing but what gives horror to the Senſes, ſuch as the Members of Martyrs were, when covered over with Wounds; may we not ſay alſo, that they cannot acknowledge better that they love Truth for it ſelf, than when preſented to us in diſcourſes wherein we can love nothing but it, and where we find alſo an infinite of diſpleaſing things. Thus theſe ſorts of Sermons may be made good uſe of to honour Truth for it ſelf, without dividing the homage which we give to it. And the leaſt Truth honoured in this ſort, would be able to edifie us more than the moſt touching inſtructions which pleaſe the Mind better.

XVIII.

There are almoſt no Sermons ſo bad, whereby a Man may not be edified, if what be ſaid therein be new, and that we know nothing what it contains by means of any other way. There is not, for Example, any Diſcourſe ſo cold either of Paradiſe or Hell, but makes great Impreſſions upon us, if we have never heard ſpeak thereof elſewhere. That which takes away the Thought of theſe things is then, that they are already known to us, and that we are accuſtomed thereunto. But if we cannot avoid this Cauſe of Humane Infirmity, we may very well at leaſt humble our ſelves thereby, and make uſe of it to acknowledge that Humane Wit is of ſo little or no account, ſeeing that the ſame Objects which have juſtly touched it at one time, do not at another, through this vain Circumſtance, that it is accuſtomed there-

thereunto; as though this Custom did change the Nature of those Objects, and took any thing from them of what they have either of terrible or great.

XIX.

'Tis one of the Reflections which the Sermons called bad gives leave to make, and many more may be added to it of this Nature, in making use of what shocks us therein, to know our proper faults. And in considering them in this Prospect, the more a Sermon is filled with Humane Defects, the more it would be proper for us to serve as a Draught of what we are, and the manner how we act. For the Lives of Christians ought to be a continual Preaching, which should carry into the Mind of others a lively Image of all Virtues. S *Peter* the Apostle recommends to us the insinuating of Humility in all things. *Humilitatem in omnibus insinuantes*, that is to say, that he wills Christians to preach Humility in all their Actions. The same may be said of all other Virtues, and we ought to do nothing which may not help to engrave them in the Heart of others, as a Preacher ought to say nothing which is not edifying to his Auditors. Nevertheless, how far are our actions from making this Impression upon the Minds of those that see them? On the contrary, what do we most commonly bring thither, but the Image of our Passions, of our disorderly Motions, of our secret Interests? We preach almost by our Actions, as they preach by their Words, and we acquit our selves of the general Ministry of Christians, as they acquit themselves of the Particular Ministry of Preachers: Let us not look upon their Faults alone, but upon our own in theirs, and let us turn one part of that disgust we have for them against our selves.

XX.

If we look narrowly thereunto, we shall find that the particular Faults into which they fall, do much resemble ours, and have almost the same Causes.

These People follow generally their Thoughts and Fancies without reflecting whether they will be proportioned to the Mind of those who hearken to them. We follow also our Humours and Passions, without any regard to proportion our Actions and Words to the Minds of those with whom we live, which is the reason that we startle them a thousand ways, and that we do nothing that edifies them.

XXI.

There are some Preachers who startle Understanding and judicious Hearers, in crying out without reason upon small things, in chaffing themselves about things which deserve it not, and by making appear I know not how many false Motives, which incommode strangely those who have the *Idea* of Justice, as well for the Motives as the Things.

But this Defect, is it not infinitely greater, and more frequent in our Lives than in Sermons? For how many motives slide into our Actions and Words, which are False, not according to Rhetorick, but according to Faith? Do we not often shew the Inclination and Esteem we have for some actions, which ought to cause nothing but sentiments of horror? Do we not receive oftentimes with Scorn and Disdain, things which ought to excite only Piety? How much do we extol things which ought to appear mean and disdainful to us? How much do we cry down some things, which indeed are Noble and Worthy to be admired? How cold do we speak of those we ought to have the greatest concern for? They are so many false motives by so much more dangerous, as they spring from the bad Disposition of the Heart; whereas those of Preachers denote often only in them a simple, and meer want of Wit.

XXII.

The more one hath the Idea of justness, be it for Things or for Motives, the more one deserves defects in Preachers. And hence one may say, that the Reputation of many of them who make a great shew in this Employment, is only grounded upon the light of their Auditors.

Auditors. If we had also understanding Spectators, and who had the Idea of the true Motives that the Objects ought to excite in us, the manner whereby we act and speak, would become almost insupportable to them. They would only see in us depraved Inclinations, unjust Impressions, lack of Sense, and love for things which deserve most, and they would find in respect of us, something of that Holy Commotion, which Jesus Christ shewed in regard of the Jews by these words. *O generatio incredula quousque vos patiar!* the Meekness wit[illegible] with us, is not then any thing but the [illegible] of Men. We only surpass by the favour of their want of light, and it is very just that we should suffer patiently in others, what they suffer continually from us.

XXIII.

What diverts Preachers from the right Way, and casts them upon false Eloquence, upon vain Thoughts, and of no Edification, is often because they have other prospects, than they ought to have in acquitting themselves of their Ministry. They would appear Wise, Eloquent, and Able, they would appear Wits; in a Word, they speak for themselves, and not for their Auditors; and in speaking in this manner, they speak often neither for their Auditors nor themselves. These are likewise those false Prospects, which are mingled with our actions, which destroy the Edification of them; if we had no other than to satisfy our Obligation, and to serve our Neighbour, they would spread an odour of Piety, which would gain hearts insensibly, but the Passions and secret Desires which are intermingled, hinder this Effect, and produce ordinarily quite different impressions from those we pretend. The desire we make appear of exalting our selves, makes us dis-esteemed in the Eyes of other Men. We please so much less, by how much it appears that we have had a Design to please: and by a Natural Contradiction in Men, they conceive justly Passions, quite opposite to those which they observe in us.

XXIV. These

XXIV.

These Preachers whereof we speak are particularly proper to make known the wretchedness and the blindness of Mens vanity. They tire themselves in their Closets to bring forth brave thoughts; they overcharge their Memory with with labour, they distribute them with boldness, and afterwards they rise from their Chair [redacted] with themselves, imagining to have [redacted] themselves in their Auditors. For Men do not seek these pretended high thoughts for any thing else but to please, and it is difficult that in thinking to please others, Men please not themselves. Nevertheless there is very often nothing at all that Persons of Piety have a Commiseration for these sorts of Sermons. Those who are not very charitable laugh at them, and almost all never think a quarter of an hour after them. 'Tis almost as Men deal with us, when instead of searching the true good, they aim only at obtaining the good repute of Men. We thereby become the Object of their disdain and malignity, and those who are the most favourable to us, scarce trouble themselves with us, the space of one quarter of an hour.

XXV.

The subtilty of these Preachers may yet serve to make us observe how little help we get from others to correct our selves of our Faults. For although there be none more exposed than those of Preachers, nevertheless, there is nothing more ordinary than to see some who remain all their life, without finding one single Person, who advertises them of it. Men think that 'tis a civility due to testifie to them, that they are satisfied with their Sermons; and those Civilities being received through Self-Love, pass for sincere Testimonies and authentick Approbations. Thus a Preacher deceived by others, and by himself, continues oftentimes

times to abuſe his Miniſtry all his life; he deſtroys inſtead of building, and he drains unprofitably, not only the Forces of his Body, but alſo thoſe of his Soul, which yet is impaired more than the Body by this employ, when he acquits himſelf not as he ought.

XXVI.

It is leſs ſtrange, that the Preachers who are ſubject to none, correct themſelves in their faults but very little. They are generally called to this Miniſtry, they preach when they will, and as they will, and no Man is particularly concerned how they do it. But who will not be aſtoniſh'd, that Preachers choſen by regular Societies, where Men admit them not to this Miniſtry, but with Diſcretion, Caution, and Mature Deliberation, ſhould oftentimes make ſhew of ſo little Spirituality and Light in their Sermons, and that they ſhould not ſtuff them leſs than others, with mean and unprofitable Scholaſtick Terms.

That which ought to increaſe our admiration upon this Point, is, that in the ſame Orders, wherein Men ſuffer thus Perſons to preach as they pleaſe, and with Faults viſibly contrary to the intent of their Miniſtry; they ſhould not ſuffer them to make a falſe ſtep in their Ceremonies, a miſtake in bowing, or that they ſhould want the leaſt of their regular Practices. There are in theſe ſorts of Societies, puniſhments ordained for all Faults, againſt Regularity; but there are none at all for thoſe who abuſe the Word of God, whether in diſtributing it to the People in vain, and abſtract thoughts, inſtead of giving them a ſolid nouriſhment, and proportion'd to their occaſions; or in deſtroying the fruit of the Truths they declared by an oſtentation of Knowledge and Eloquence. They leave abſolutely to the Preachers, the manner whereby they acquit themſelves of their Miniſtry. They let them follow their Ideas, and if they give them ſome Rules to govern themſelves by, they are ſo extravagant, and ſo little exact, that they

they think to follow them, by doing quite the contrary to what they ought.

XXVII.

We cannot doubtleſs, alleadge any other reaſon for this Conduct, unleſs that they know very well in theſe Societies, in what conſiſts the manner of practiſing the Ceremonies; but have a very ſmall Idea, what 'tis to pronounce Gods Word in a way worthy of him, and know ſcarcely the importance of ſome Faults which are committed in abuſing of this Miniſtry, and in relating it to our Selves, and not to the benefit of our Auditors.

This is the concluſion which methinks ſhould be drawn from thence, but it extends it ſelf much farther than this Example; and if we will do our ſelves juſtice, we ſhall find that it concerns us divers and ſundry ways. Becauſe we are exact in the practice of certain exterior Duties, even to the being fixed thereunto, in a ſuperſtitious and judicial manner; but we have only very confus'd Ideas of the greateſt part of Spiritual Duties, and Interiour Virtues; which is the reaſon that we ſcarcely know the faults we commit againſt theſe Duties and Virtues. We know not what true Humility, inward mortification, the love of Juſtice, the dependance upon God, and the deſire of ſuffering is: And as they are theſe inward Virtues, which are the ſource of the Unction, and Edification, which ſpread themſelves into our Actions and Words; it is not ſtrange, that not knowing them, and not having a true Idea of them, there's nothing that's edifying either in our Converſation, or in our Lives.

FINIS.